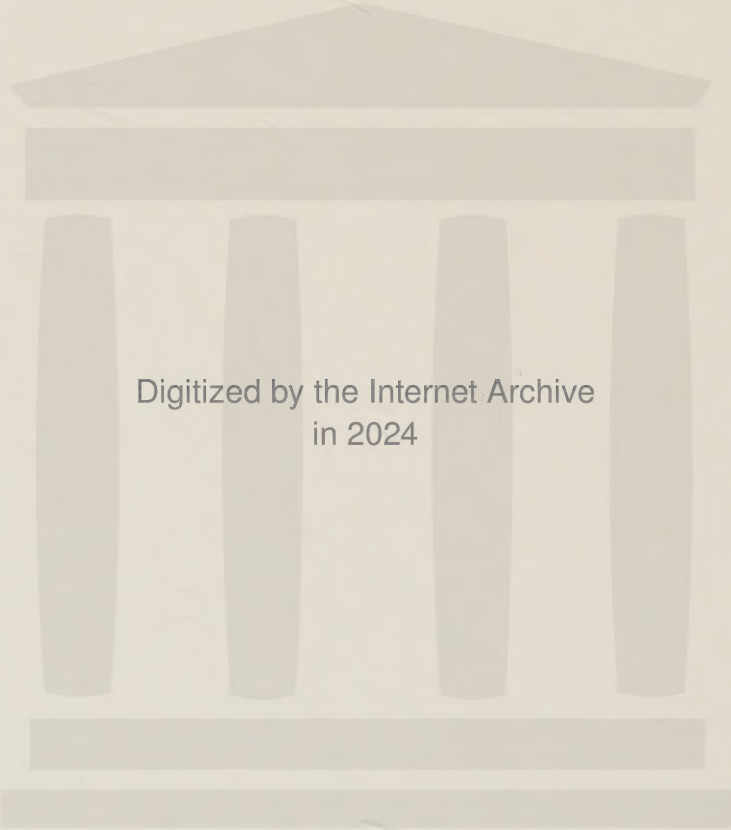


IID
HISTORICAL DICTIONARY *of*
SYRIA



DAVID COMMINS AND
DAVID W. LESCH

THIRD
EDITION



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HISTORICAL DICTIONARY

The historical dictionaries present essential information on a broad range of subjects, including American and world history, art, business, cities, countries, cultures, customs, film, global conflicts, international relations, literature, music, philosophy, religion, sports, and theater. Written by experts, all contain highly informative introductory essays of the topic and detailed chronologies that, in some cases, cover vast historical time periods but still manage to heavily feature more recent events.

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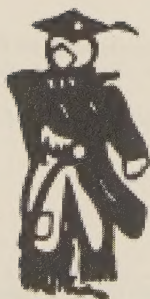
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Historical Dictionary of Syria

Third Edition

David Commins and David W. Lesch



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Editor's Foreword

What a difference a decade can make. When the second edition of *Historical Dictionary of Syria* appeared, it was possible to talk of relative peace and quiet and modest economic and social advances, although there were already some worries on all fronts. But it was hardly expected that, after having been spared the brunt of the Arab Spring, all of a sudden, in 2011, the bitterest and bloodiest of all domestic conflicts in the region would break out and continue unabated to the time of publication with no likelihood that it will cease or that the state will recover its balance. Indeed, it is even uncertain whether a state will survive and, if it does, what it will mean for the people. This cataclysm is such a deviation from the earlier path and its impact so devastating that this edition includes a special section devoted to the Syrian Uprising. But even this is rooted in Syria's earlier period, thus readers will benefit from considering the antecedents and broader picture, which can be accomplished by consulting the dictionary section.

Like other historical dictionaries, this volume approaches the country in different ways. For Syria, the chronology is particularly important, or rather the two chronologies, the general one and the one devoted exclusively to the Syrian Uprising. The overall situation is then considered in the introduction (or rather two introductions). But the bulk of the information is included in the dictionary section and its parallel on the uprising. There, in alphabetical order, it is possible to find entries on key individuals (both those on the government side and the opposition), places, institutions, and events, as well as on more general topics, for example, the economy, education, health and human rights, foreign policy, and religion. While the main bases are covered, and in considerable detail, the bibliography serves as a springboard to other literature on a vast range of topics.

This third edition was written by an impressive team of Syria specialists, David Commins and David W. Lesch. Commins, who is professor of history at Dickinson College, lived in Syria and has since visited frequently. He wrote the first and second editions and contributed heavily to this third edition. He is also author of several books, including *Islamic Reform: Politics and Social Change in Late Ottoman Syria* and *The Gulf States: A Modern History*. Lesch is professor of Middle East history at Trinity University. He, too, has visited Syria on numerous occasions and is the author of a dozen books, many of them on Syria, including *The New Lion of Damascus: Bashar al-Asad and Modern Syria* and *Syria: The Fall of the House of Asad*. Together they form an excellent team, with knowledge of earlier and more

recent periods, and also proven experience in explaining one of the most secretive countries in the Middle East and one that has become more significant than ever for the entire region.

Jon Woronoff
Series Editor

Acknowledgments

The authors are grateful to the many Syrians and scholars of Syria who have shared their knowledge and understanding of the country's rich history and complex modern dynamics. Preparation of this edition owes much to the diligent research on recent events and personalities undertaken by Jacob Uzman and Krystal Rountree.

David Lesch would like to thank his wife, Judy, as always, for her unending support and love and her understanding and tolerance of the publication process.

David Commins is grateful to his wife, Susan Lindt, and to Oliver, for sharing adventures near and far.

Reader's Note

Because this work is intended for a general audience, we transliterate Arabic names and terms without the diacritics that specialists often prefer and that mean nothing to others. There are two Arabic consonants, *hamza* and *ayn*, that cannot be represented by any letters in the English alphabet. The conventional designations are ‘ for *hamza* and ` for *ayn*. We have transliterated these two letters when they occur in the middle and end of a word. For example, “Ba`th Party” or “Faruq al-Shara`” show the *ayn*, but “Ali” does not.

In Arabic, the definite article is “al-,” and it is included only when a name is first mentioned. To look up al-Quwwatli, for example, readers will find it under “Q” and not “A.”

The Arabic word *mamluk* is used in two related but distinct senses. In the general sense, indicated by the lowercase, it refers to a slave soldier. It may also refer to a sultanate that ruled Syria for 250 years, and in that sense it is capitalized.

To facilitate the rapid and efficient location of information and make this book as useful a reference tool as possible, extensive cross-references have been provided in the dictionary section. Within individual entries, terms that have their own entries are in **boldface type** the first time they appear. Related terms that do not appear in the text are indicated in the *See also*. *See* refers to other entries that deal with this topic.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

AKP	Justice and Development Party (<i>Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi</i>)
CUP	Committee of Union and Progress
DMZ	Demilitarized Zones
EU	European Union
FSA	Free Syrian Army
GDP	gross domestic product
GFTU	General Federation of Trade Unions
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
ICARDA	International Center for Agricultural Research in Dry Areas
KNC	Kurdish National Council
LCC	Local Coordinating Committees
NRCC	National Revolutionary Command Council
PKK	Kurdistan Workers' Party (<i>Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan</i>)
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organization
PYD	Democratic Union Party (<i>Partiya Yekitiya Demokrat</i>)
SCP	Syrian Communist Party
SNC	Syrian National Council
SSNP	Syrian Social National Party
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UAR	United Arab Republic
UN	United Nations
UNDOF	United Nations Disengagement Observer Force
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WTO	World Trade Organization

Map



Map of Syria. Courtesy of the U.S. Department of State, www.state.gov/p/nea/ci/sy/.

Chronology

BC

3500 An early settlement is established at Ebla.

2450–2350 Ebla flourishes in northern Syria.

2200–2000 Amorites migrate into northern Syria.

2000–1800 Amorites dominate the north; Ugarit and Aleppo emerge.

1800–1650 The Amorite kingdom of Yamkhad is founded at Aleppo.

1650–1350 Mitanni dominates in the north; the Egyptians dominate in the south.

1590 The Hittites invade the north.

1350–1200 The Hittites supplant Mitanni rule; Carchemish emerges as a major Hittite kingdom; the Egyptians continue to dominate the south.

1200–1000 Early Iron Age; the Aramaeans immigrate to the area; the Sea Peoples carry out raids along the coast; the Assyrian military conducts expeditions.

c. 1180 Ugarit is destroyed.

1000–732 The Aramaean kingdom of Aram is established with a capital at Damascus; the Aramaean kingdom at Hama is founded in central Syria.

732–612 The Assyrians rule.

612–538 The Babylonians and Neo-Babylonians rule.

538–333 Persian Achaemenid Empire rules.

333–332 Alexander the Great conquers Syria.

312–AD 106 The Arab Nabataean dynasty rules in southern Syria.

301–240 Era of Seleucid rule.

240–198 The Ptolemies of Egypt annex Syria.

198–64 Era of Seleucid decline.

64 BC–AD 334 Era of Roman rule.

AD

- 106–272** A semiautonomous kingdom is founded at Palmyra.
- 334–634** The capital of the Roman Empire moves to Byzantium; Syria is ruled by Christian emperors.
- 632–661** The Rightly Guided Caliphs rule.
- 634–641** The Arab Muslim conquests take place.
- 661–750** The Umayyad caliphate reigns.
- 750–1258** The Abbasid caliphate rules.
- 868–905** The Tulunids rule.
- 905–935** Abbasid rule is restored.
- 935–969** The Ikhshidids rule.
- 944–1016** The Hamdanid dynasty rules northern Syria.
- 978–1078** The Fatimid dynasty rules southern Syria.
- 1016–1023** The Fatimids rule northern Syria.
- 1023–1079** The Mirdasid dynasty rules northern Syria.
- 1079–1104** The Saljuks rule in Damascus.
- 1086–1113** The Saljuks rule in Aleppo.
- 1098–1303** The Crusades take place.
- 1104–1171** The Atabegs establish themselves in Damascus.
- 1128–1171** The Atabegs establish themselves in Aleppo.
- 1171–1260** The Ayyubid dynasty rules.
- 1260–1516** The Mamluk Sultanate reigns.
- 1516–1918** The Ottoman dynasty rules.
- 1725–1783** The Azm governors rule.
- 1775–1804** Ahmad al-Jazzar rules.
- 1831–1840** The Egyptian occupation takes place.
- 1839–1876** Tanzimat era.
- 1850** A communal massacre is carried out in Aleppo.

1860 A communal massacre takes place in Damascus.

1876 December: The Ottoman constitution is promulgated.

1876–1909 Sultan Abdulhamid II reigns.

1878 February: Abdulhamid suspends the constitution.

1908 July: A military mutiny is carried out to restore the constitution.

1908–1918 Constitutional era.

1914 The Ottoman Empire enters World War I on the side of the Entente.

1914–1915 In the Husayn -McMahon Correspondence, Britain pledges to support an independent Arab kingdom in exchange for a revolt against Ottoman rule in Arabia.

1916 May: The Sykes–Picot Agreement is signed between France and Britain to partition Arab lands of the Ottoman Empire into spheres of influence.

June: The Arab Revolt is carried out against Ottoman rule.

1918 October: The Allies defeat the Ottomans and end Ottoman rule in Syria; Amir Faysal forms an Arab government.

1920 April: The San Remo Agreement assigns France the League of Nations mandate for Syria. **July:** The French army occupies Aleppo; the Battle of Maysalun is waged; the French occupy Damascus. **September:** France creates Greater Lebanon by detaching portions of Syrian territory and incorporating them into Lebanon; Syria is divided into separate states centered on Damascus and Aleppo; a separate regime is established for the Alawis.

1920–1946 The French Mandate is founded.

1922 France establishes a separate regime for Jabal Druze.

1925 France combines Damascus, Aleppo, Homs, and Hama into a single administrative unit.

1925–1927 The Great Revolt takes place.

1928 April–June: Elections are held to the Constituent Assembly; the National Bloc minority dominates the proceedings. **July:** The Constituent Assembly publishes a draft constitution. **August:** France rejects the draft constitution and adjourns the assembly.

1929 February: France prorogues the Constituent Assembly.

1930 May: France approves a modified version of the Constituent Assembly's constitution as a basis for national elections to parliament.

1931–1932 December–January: National elections to parliament are held; the National Bloc wins 17 of 69 seats.

1933 November: France temporarily suspends parliament for rejecting France's proposal for a treaty.

1936 January–March: A general strike is held throughout Syria in response to the French crackdown on the National Bloc; the strike ends in victory for the National Bloc when the French invite its leaders to Paris to negotiate a treaty. **April–September:** Negotiations on the Franco–Syrian Treaty are held to define mechanisms for Syria's eventual independence and admittance to the League of Nations. **November:** National elections to parliament are held, resulting in a huge victory for the National Bloc. **December:** Parliament elects Hashim al-Atasi as president of the republic; Jamil Mardam is appointed prime minister; parliament ratifies a treaty with France; Jabal Druze and the Territory of the Alawis are incorporated into Syria.

1937 November: The League of Nations places Alexandretta Province under a special autonomous regime with tenuous formal links to Syria.

1938 July: The Franco–Turkish Friendship Treaty guarantees Turkey's neutrality in the event of aggression against France; Turkey is allowed to send troops into Alexandretta. **December:** The French parliament refuses to act on the Franco–Syrian Treaty, effectively killing it.

1939 February: The Mardam government resigns. **June:** Turkey formally annexes Alexandretta. **July:** The high commissioner suspends the constitution, dissolves parliament, and restores separate administration for Jabal Druze, Latakia, and Jazira.

1939–1945 World War II is fought.

1940 December: The Vichy administration is established in Syria.

1941 June–July: An Allied invasion of Syria and Lebanon is carried out to remove the Vichy administration; Britain becomes the dominant military power in Syria. **October:** The Free French restore a constitutional government.

1942 February: France reunites Jabal Druze and Latakia with the rest of Syria.

1943 July: National elections result in a huge victory for the National Party; Shukri al-Quwwatli becomes president.

1945 May: Anti-French demonstrations are staged by crowds seeking independence. **29–30 May:** A French bombardment of Damascus kills 400 Syrians; British forces wrest control from the French.

1946 17 April: France withdraws troops.

1946–1958 The Syrian Republic is established.

1947 The Ba`th Party is founded by Michel Aflaq and Salah al-Din al-Bitar.

1948 The Arab–Israeli war is fought.

1949 30 March: A military coup is carried out by Husni al-Za'im. **20 July:** An armistice is signed with Israel. **14 August:** A military coup is staged by Sami al-Hinnawi. **15–16 November:** An election is held for the Constituent Assembly. **19 December:** A military coup is carried out by Adib al-Shishakli.

1950 February: Akram al-Hawrani forms the Arab Socialist Party. **September:** A new constitution is promulgated.

1951 November: Shishakli dismisses the civilian government.

1952 April: Shishakli bans all political parties.

1953 July: Shishakli is elected president in the plebiscite.

1954 February: Shishakli is overthrown; the civilian democratic regime and 1950 constitution are restored. **September:** National elections increase the strength of neutralist and leftist trends.

1955 February: The Baghdad Pact, a pro-Western military alliance between Iraq and Turkey, is formed; political pressures are placed on Syria to join the alliance. **April:** The assassination of Col. Adnan al-Malki, leader of the neutralist faction in the officer corps, bolsters popular anti-Western sentiment. **October:** A security pact with Egypt and Saudi Arabia is formed to keep Syria out of the Baghdad Pact.

1956 February: An arms deal is reached with Czechoslovakia.

1957 August–October: A crisis point is reached in relations with the United States when the Syrians expel three American diplomats for conspiring with politicians and army officers against the government; Turkish troops gather near the border following persuasion by Washington.

1958 February: The United Arab Republic (UAR) is formed between Syria and Egypt.

1959 December: Ba`thist ministers resign from the UAR government.

1961 July: Socialist decrees nationalize banks and other large firms. **22 September:** Syria secedes from the UAR.

1962 28 March–2 April: Abortive military coups are carried out against the conservative civilian government.

1963 8 March: A military coup is staged by Ba`thist and Nasserist officers.

18 July: A Nasserist uprising is suppressed; Ba`thist officers take power.

1964 April: Antigovernment demonstrations in Hama are forcibly repressed; a provisional constitution is promulgated.

1965 January: Industry and foreign trade are nationalized. **May:** A struggle for power within the Ba`th Party leads to Aflaq's resignation as secretary-general.

1966 23 February: A power struggle within the Ba`th Party leads to a coup by radical "Neo-Ba`thist" faction.

1967 5–10 June: War breaks out between Israel and Syria, Egypt, and Jordan; Israeli forces seize the Golan Heights; relations with United States are severed. **November:** The United Nations (UN) passes Resolution 242, calling for negotiations to end the Arab–Israeli conflict and the return of Arab territory seized in June.

1968–1969 A power struggle develops between Salah al-Jadid and Hafiz al-Asad.

1970 12 November: Asad comes to power in the Corrective Movement, a coup d'état against the Ba`th Party's radical wing.

1971 February: Asad becomes president of Syria.

1973 12 March: A new permanent constitution is promulgated. **6–24 October:** Syria and Egypt fight a war against Israel.

1974 May: Syria and Israel sign a disengagement accord to separate armed forces on the Golan Heights. **June:** U.S.–Syrian diplomatic relations are reestablished.

1975 April: Civil war erupts in Lebanon.

1976 June: Syrian forces intervene in the Lebanese Civil War against leftist Lebanese and Palestinian militias. **October:** A cease-fire is declared in the Lebanese Civil War.

1979 June: Muslim Brothers carry out a massacre of military cadets in Aleppo.

1980 Islamist and secular opponents launch a campaign of demonstrations, protests, and assassinations against the Asad regime; the government responds with draconian measures.

1981 December: Israel extends its law to the Golan Heights.

1982 February: An uprising by Islamist forces in Hama is brutally quelled by the Syrian Army. **June–August:** Israel invades Lebanon, skirmishes with Syrian troops, forces the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) to leave Lebanon, and engineers the election of Bashir Gemayel as president of Lebanon. **September:** Gemayel is assassinated; his brother, Amin Gemayel, succeeds him; the United States, France, and Italy dispatch a multinational force to stabilize Beirut after a Christian militia massacres Palestinian civilians.

1983 17 May: Lebanese and Israeli negotiators agree on a security accord; Syria announces its opposition to the agreement and rallies Lebanese parties and militias to undermine it. **13 November:** President Asad falls ill and disappears from public view. **27 November:** Asad makes his first public appearance in two weeks. **December:** A confrontation between Syria and the United States and Israel over Lebanon escalates; Syria supports Palestinian factions attacking groups loyal to PLO chairman Yasir Arafat; they expel Arafat from the northern Lebanese city of Tripoli.

1984 February: The United States withdraws its forces from Lebanon. **29 February:** Lebanese president Amin Gemayel formally renounces the May 17 agreement with Israel. **March:** A power struggle between Hafiz al-Asad and his brother Rif'at threatens to destabilize the regime. **May:** Rif'at al-Asad leaves Syria on a “diplomatic” trip that turns into a six-month exile. **November:** Rif'at returns to Syria, but much of his power base has been dismantled.

1985 January: Asad issues presidential amnesty to certain members of the Muslim Brothers and invites several exiles to return to Syria. **June:** Israel withdraws its forces to a strip of Lebanese territory along the border that it declares a security zone. **December:** Rif'at al-Asad again leaves the country for an extended period.

1986 10 October: Great Britain severs ties with Syria because of its role in an abortive terrorist operation at London's Heathrow Airport. **24 October:** The United States and Canada recall ambassadors from Damascus. **November:** West Germany downgrades relations with Syria due to its role in a March bombing of a German American Friendship Club in West Berlin.

1987 February: Syrian troops enter West Beirut to end several months of incessant strife among rival militias. **June:** Syria closes offices of the terrorist Abu Nidal organization to improve ties with Europe and the United States.

1988 August: War between Iran and Iraq ends in a victory for Iraq and defeat for Asad's pro-Iranian foreign policy. **September:** Lebanese president Amin Gemayel's term expires without the election of a successor; Gemayel appoints General Michel Aoun as head of a caretaker government; the Lebanese cabinet rejects Aoun, while anti-Syrian groups rally behind him.

1989 March–August: Clashes between General Aoun and pro-Syrian forces prompt intense Arab diplomatic efforts. **12 October:** The Lebanese parliament convenes at Ta'if, in Saudi Arabia, and agrees to modestly redistribute political power and calls on Syrian forces to withdraw from the Beirut area to the Bekaa Valley within two years. **27 December:** Syria and Egypt restore relations that were broken off when Egypt signed a peace treaty with Israel in 1979.

1990 2 August: Iraq invades Kuwait. **20 August:** Syria sends 1,200 troops to Saudi Arabia. **13 October:** Syrian warplanes bomb Michel Aoun's presidential palace; Aoun flees to the French embassy and clears the way for implementing the Ta'if Accord.

1991 January–March: Operation Desert Storm evicts the Iraqi Army from Kuwait; 15,000 Syrian troops are part of the coalition but do not participate in combat. **22 May:** Syria and Lebanon sign the Treaty of Brotherhood, Cooperation, and Coordination to regulate bilateral relations. **30 October–4 November:** Syria attends an international peace conference at Madrid and agrees to start bilateral talks with Israel but boycotts multilateral talks. **10 December:** Syria and Israel begin talks in Washington, D.C.

1992 June–September: The Lebanese hold popular demonstrations calling for Syria to withdraw its forces from much of the country to the Bekaa Valley; Lebanese elections take place amid a general strike in East Beirut and a widespread Maronite boycott. **December:** Israel expels 400 Palestinian militants to Lebanon; the Arabs suspend the peace talks in protest.

1993 April: The peace talks resume. **August:** The Oslo Accords between Israel and the PLO weaken Syria's negotiating position.

1994 16 January: U.S. president Bill Clinton meets Hafiz al-Asad in Damascus to push peace talks forward. **21 January:** President Asad's 32-year-old son, Basil, who had recently emerged as the likely successor to his father, dies in an automobile accident. **April:** Russia and Syria sign the first military and technical agreement since the fall of the Soviet Union. **26 October:** Jordan and Israel sign a peace treaty.

1995 November: Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Rabin is assassinated by a Jewish zealot. **December:** The new Israeli prime minister, Shimon Peres, initiates resumption of peace talks at Wye River Plantation in the United States.

1996 January: The Wye River talks continue; the Turkish government presses Syria to cease support for the separatist Kurdish movement. **February:** Palestinian suicide bombers kill dozens of Israelis in less than two weeks; Syria refuses to condemn the terrorist attacks, and Israel breaks off

peace talks; Israel and Turkey sign a strategic security pact, creating a sense of encirclement in Damascus. **March:** Syria joins the dialogue on expanding free trade between the European Union (EU) and Southern Mediterranean countries launched at Barcelona the previous year. **April:** Israel launches the “Grapes of Wrath” military campaign in Lebanon to retaliate for Hizballah attacks on its patrols in South Lebanon. **May:** A series of explosions in several Syrian cities go unclaimed by any group; Israeli national elections bring Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu to office, and his rejection of “land for peace” formula leads to a three-year freeze in peace talks. **June:** The Arab summit in Cairo marks a Syrian bid to forge a new regional alliance to counter Netanyahu’s policies. **December:** An Islamic fundamentalist group bombs a bus in Damascus, killing 10 people.

1997 June: The border with Iraq reopens for trade; the government permits businessmen to travel to Iraq and closes Radio Voice of Iraq, an anti-Saddam Husayn station.

1998 February: Hafiz al-Asad officially dismisses his brother Rif at as vice president. **August:** The oil pipeline from Iraq reopens for the first time since 1982. **October:** A crisis breaks out with Turkey regarding Syrian support for the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK), an organization that had fought a guerilla war for Kurdish secession since 1984, and the crisis ends when Syria agrees to Turkish demands that it expel PKK leaders and shut down PKK camps in Lebanon and offices in Damascus.

1999 February: Jordan’s King Husayn dies, and his son Abdallah succeeds to the throne; a national referendum reelects Hafiz al-Asad for a fifth seven-year term as president. **April:** Jordan’s King Abdallah II visits Damascus, and talks with President Asad result in a notable thaw in relations that had turned cold when Jordan made peace with Israel five years before; the two leaders agree to revive commercial ties. **May:** A new spirit of friendship is formed with Jordan with a formal agreement to build a dam on the Yarmuk River; Israeli national elections result in a victory for Labor Party leader Ehud Barak over Likud prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu; Barak’s victory creates a mood of optimism that the three-year stalemate in Syrian–Israeli peace talks could come to an end. **June:** President Asad and Prime Minister Barak publicly declare their willingness to strive for a peace agreement and express cautious optimism about one another; while substantial obstacles remain, the leaders’ remarks foster a more positive climate for peace talks. **July:** Asad visits Moscow for first time since 1991, to confer with Russian president Boris Yeltsin on the peace process and Syria’s bid to purchase arms. **September:** American efforts to restart the Israeli–Syrian peace talks pick up with visits to Damascus by Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and to Washington by Syrian foreign minister Faruq al-Shara’. **October:**

Government forces seize a compound belonging to Rif at al-Asad in Latakia to shut down an illegal port and diminish his ability to challenge Bashar al-Asad's anticipated succession. **November:** Bashar al-Asad visits France, his first official mission to a European country and a further sign that his father intends for him to follow as president. **December:** A new and intensive U.S. diplomatic effort results in the resumption of Syrian–Israeli peace talks at Shepherdstown, West Virginia, the following month.

2000 2–10 January: Peace talks at Shepherdstown make some progress, but Syria's insistence on an Israeli commitment to full withdrawal from the Golan Heights before further talks creates a new stalemate. **February:** The regional climate worsens as Hizballah mounts new attacks on Israeli positions in Southern Lebanon and Israel retaliates. **5 March:** Israel declares its intention to unconditionally withdraw from Lebanon in four months. **14 March:** Asad forms a new cabinet, ostensibly to smooth the succession of his son Bashar; other than the prime minister, the most powerful figures in key ministries keep their posts. **26 March:** The meeting between Asad and Clinton at Geneva fails to revive Syrian–Israeli peace talks, souring relations between Washington and Damascus and ending Barak's bid for an agreement with Asad. **13 April:** Israel declares an end to suspension of settlement construction in the Golan Heights, signaling Barak's view that talks have reached a dead end. **10 May:** Bashar al-Asad's anticorruption drive targets Mahmud al-Zu'bi, recently dismissed as prime minister, for undefined abuses. **24 May:** Israel withdraws its forces from Lebanon after a 22-year occupation. **10 June:** President Hafiz al-Asad dies after a long illness one week before a planned Ba'th Party Congress that was to elect Bashar to a seat on the Regional Command. **11 June:** Parliament amends the constitution's provision on the minimum age for head of state to legalize Bashar al-Asad's succession. **27 June:** Parliament ratifies Bashar al-Asad as the sole candidate in a presidential referendum. **10 July:** Bashar al-Asad wins 97 percent of the vote in the referendum. **11–25 July:** Palestinian–Israeli talks at Camp David fail to resolve disputes regarding refugees, borders, Jerusalem, and Israeli settlements. President Clinton joins Ehud Barak in denouncing Yasir Arafat for refusing to compromise. **August:** Proponents of reform hold public meetings, organize voluntary associations, and call for the end to authoritarian regulations on political expression. **28–29 September:** A Palestinian uprising against Israel erupts in the West Bank and jeopardizes seven years of Israeli–Palestinian diplomacy. **1 October:** Bashar al-Asad goes to Cairo for his first official visit to an Arab capital to discuss the regional crisis caused by renewed Palestinian–Israeli fighting. **16 November:** The release of 600 political prisoners raises hopes that Bashar al-Asad will fulfill his promise to relax restrictions on civil liberties.

2001 6 February: Likud Party leader Ariel Sharon is elected prime minister of Israel. Ali Farzat publishes a weekly satirical magazine, the *Lamplighter* (*al-Dumari*), the first independent periodical since 1963. **8 February:** Bashar al-Asad announces limits to freedom of expression, marking the beginning of a crackdown on the budding political reform movement. **27–28 March:** An Arab summit held in Amman to devise a common front against Israel's Ariel Sharon includes a meeting between Asad and Arafat to bring PLO and Syrian positions into alignment. **5–8 May:** Pope John Paul II visits Damascus, and his tour of the Umayyad Mosque is the first time a pope has entered a mosque. **11 September:** Terrorist attacks on the United States kill 3,000 people and mark a watershed in American relations with the Muslim world. **8 October:** The government attacks the political reform movement by charging two independent members of the People's Assembly with undermining the constitution. **November:** The regime balances its crackdown on liberal dissidents with the release of about 120 political prisoners. **December:** Bashar al-Asad forms a new cabinet that retains the prime minister and veteran ministers of defense and foreign relations.

2002 8 March: Bashar al-Asad goes to Beirut on the eve of an Arab summit and is the first Syrian head of state to visit Lebanon's presidential palace. **June:** The United States accuses Syria of supporting terrorist actions carried out by Hizballah and Palestinian organizations. **August:** Political trials of eight democracy activists conclude with guilty verdicts and sentences ranging from three to 10 years. **8 November:** The UN Security Council passes Resolution 1441 requiring Iraq to dismantle weapons of mass destruction; Syria votes for the resolution, along with the rest of the council members.

2003 19 March: The United States launches a war to overthrow Saddam Husayn's Ba`thist regime in Iraq; Syrian demonstrators protest the U.S. invasion. **9 April:** Baghdad falls to American troops. **May:** U.S. secretary of state Colin Powell visits Damascus to persuade Syrians to shut down the offices of militant Palestinian groups on the U.S. list of terrorist organizations. **5 October:** Israeli warplanes attack a Palestinian training camp near Damascus in retaliation for an Islamic Jihad suicide bombing in Haifa in the first Israeli attack on Syrian soil since the October 1973 War. **24 October:** Bashar al-Asad shuffles the cabinet for the first time since June 2000, but apart from appointing a new prime minister, the other major ministers stay in place. **5 December:** U.S. president George W. Bush signs into law the Syrian Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act, threatening new trade sanctions if Syria does not withdraw from Lebanon, abandon its non-conventional weapons program, and end support for insurgents in Iraq and Palestinian and Lebanese groups on the U.S. list of terrorist organizations.

2004 9 March: Protests are held in Damascus for political reform on the anniversary of the 1963 Ba`thist Revolution. **12 March:** Clashes erupt in al-Qamishli between government forces and Kurdish protesters condemning the Asad regime for denying political and cultural rights. **27 April:** A vacant UN building is bombed in Damascus. **May:** Longtime defense minister Mustafa Tlas resigns. **2 September:** The UN Security Council approves Resolution 1559, calling for the complete withdrawal of foreign (Syrian) forces from Lebanon.

2005 14 February: Former Lebanese prime minister Rafiq al-Hariri is assassinated; Washington recalls its ambassador the next day. **February–March:** Anti-Syrian protests in Lebanon following Hariri's killing grow into the Cedar Revolution, calling for the removal of all Syrian forces. **26 April:** Under intense international pressure, Syrian forces complete withdrawal from Lebanon. **June:** The Ba`th Party Congress reaffirms the party's dominant political role and does not pass major political reforms, although several aging party leaders resign to make way for younger figures; President Asad follows the congress with a shake-up of security chiefs. **12 October:** Interior Minister Ghazi al-Kan'an dies in suspicious circumstances. **16 October:** Syrian activists issue the Damascus Declaration for National Democratic Change, calling for an end to emergency laws and security courts and for the granting of civil liberties. **21 October:** An initial UN investigation implicates Syrian and Lebanese intelligence in the Hariri assassination.

2006 February: President Asad reshuffles the cabinet, appointing 15 new members to the 34-member body. **12 May:** Syrian and Lebanese activists issue the Beirut–Damascus Declaration, seeking normal relations and implying criticism of Syrian interference in Lebanon. **June:** The regime responds to the Beirut–Damascus Declaration by arresting two leading activists. **July–August:** Israel wages war against Hizballah in Lebanon. **12 September:** After a failed attempt to detonate a car bomb at the U.S. embassy in Damascus, three of the four attackers are killed by Syrian guards. **November:** Syria and Iraq restore diplomatic relations. **December:** Dry weather during the first part of Syria's rainy season marks the beginning of devastating, historic drought.

2007 January: The UN sets up the Special Tribunal for Lebanon to try the killers of Hariri. **March–April:** Relations with the EU and United States thaw. **May:** Prominent activists in the Damascus Declaration for National Democratic Change group are arrested and sentenced to lengthy prison sentences in a crackdown on reformers. **July:** Bashar al-Asad is reelected president in a public referendum. **August:** Germany renews aid to Syria that had been suspended since the Hariri assassination. **6 September:** The Israelis

carry out a raid on a suspected nuclear facility at al-Kibar. **December:** Additional reformers in the Damascus Declaration for National Democratic Change group are placed under arrest.

2008 January: The drought intensifies and broadens its reach, causing massive losses of livestock. **29 March:** Syria hosts the Arab League summit. **5 July:** Political prisoners riot at Sednaya Prison. **12–13 July:** Bashar al-Asad visits France for a Euro-Mediterranean summit, ending political isolation by the EU. **1 August:** A top advisor to President Asad on sensitive military and security issues is assassinated at a resort near Tartus. **4 September:** Leaders of France, Turkey, and Qatar meet in Damascus for a summit on regional issues. **27 September:** A car bomb on the outskirts of Damascus kills 17; the government blames religious extremists. **14 October:** Syria and Lebanon agree to establish official relations for the first time. **26 October:** U.S. military forces in Iraq raid eastern Syria, pursuing Iraqi insurgents and killing eight. **28 October:** Anti-American demonstrations are held in Damascus following the border raid two days earlier.

2009 January: There is no relief for farmers and herders as the drought continues for the third year. **10 March:** The stock exchange opens in Damascus as part of gradual economic reform. **July:** Syria bolsters punishment for honor killings. **August:** Tensions mount with Iraq regarding charges that Damascus bears responsibility for recent bombings in Baghdad. **13 November:** President Asad visits France once again for talks with President Nicolas Sarkozy. **3 December:** The bombing of a bus near a Shi'i shrine outside Damascus kills at least three.

2010 February: The United States appoints an ambassador to Damascus after a five-year hiatus. Leaders of Syria, Iran, and Hizballah hold a summit in Damascus. **March:** Security forces clash with Kurds celebrating Kurdish New Year in al-Raqqah. **May:** The United States decides to maintain sanctions against Syria for its ties to Hizballah and its nonconventional weapons programs. **July:** The government bans the face veil for students and teachers in schools. Syrian and Saudi leaders meet in Beirut to resolve the Lebanese political stalemate. **December:** Thousands of farmers and herders forsake homes in the face of prolonged drought even though normal levels of rain fall in parts of the country.

2011 March: The Syrian Uprising breaks out, with protests in a number of towns; in Dar'a, security forces fire on and kill demonstrators aggrieved by the deaths of schoolchildren who had been detained for writing antiregime graffiti. **April:** Demonstrations grow in size and spread throughout the country; civilian casualties rise as the government escalates repression; the ban on the face veil is lifted. **May:** The government sends tanks into cities to suppress protests; President Asad announces the establishment of a Syrian Na-

tional Dialogue Committee. **June:** Thousands flee to Turkey from a northern Syrian town under government attack; President Asad renews his promise to launch a national dialogue; the Special Tribunal for Lebanon indicts four men linked to Hizballah for the Hariri assassination. **July:** The government quells demonstrations in Hama by force, with dozens killed; defectors from the military announce the formation of the Free Syrian Army; the first conference of opposition groups meets in Istanbul. **August:** The army deploys tanks in the fight against rebels in Hama; the UN Security Council issues its first statement condemning the Syrian government for using excessive force against civilians; violence escalates throughout the month in different parts of the country. **September:** Russia denounces EU sanctions on Syria; clashes continue between government and opposition forces. **October:** Opposition groups establish the Syrian National Council (SNC) in an attempt to create an alternative to the Asad regime; China and Russia veto a UN resolution condemning the Syrian government for using violence against civilians; the United States withdraws its ambassador from Damascus. **November:** Syria's membership in the Arab League is suspended for its refusal to accept a peace plan. **December:** Under intense pressure, the Syrian government permits the arrival of an Arab League observer mission, but it proves ineffective; suicide bombers attack security buildings in Damascus, killing 44; as the year ends, the conflict escalates into a civil war.

2012 January: Free Syrian Army forces make forays into Damascus; the Salafist Nusra Front emerges and signals the rising influence of extremist religious forces in the uprising. **February:** Russia and China veto a UN Security Council resolution against the Asad regime; a fierce battle is waged between government and rebel forces for the Baba Amr neighborhood in Homs; the government holds a referendum on a revised constitution. **March:** UN envoy Kofi Annan's peace plan obtains endorsement by the Security Council and the Arab League. **April:** A UN-brokered cease-fire fails to hold; fighting intensifies in Aleppo and Damascus suburbs. **May:** The government holds multiparty elections to parliament; suicide and car bombs become more frequent rebel tactics; Syria's diplomatic isolation intensifies as several Western countries expel its ambassadors. **June:** Mass killing in Hula, a village in central Syria, draws attention to the growing frequency of atrocities and the increasing nature of sectarian conflict; Syria shoots down a Turkish warplane near the border, worsening regional tensions. **July:** Internal differences plague the SNC meeting in Cairo; a new atrocity in central Syria claims up to 200 lives; the bombing of National Security headquarters in Damascus kills several high-ranking intelligence and military figures; Russia and China veto a UN Security Council resolution to impose sanctions on the Asad regime. **August:** Rebel forces seize control in parts of Aleppo, and the government responds with reinforcements to retake the city, leading to a

protracted struggle for control; Prime Minister Riyadh Hijab resigns and defects; UN envoy Kofi Annan resigns after failure to end the conflict; a UN General Assembly resolution calls for Asad to give up power; Algerian diplomat Lakhdar Brahimi is named to replace Annan as head of the joint UN–Arab League peace mission; an exodus of refugees accelerates in the face of escalating violence throughout the country. **September:** Suicide bombers attack the military headquarters in Damascus; the fight for Aleppo intensifies. **October:** Syria and Turkey exchange mortar fire along the border; the regime turns to the Syrian Air Force to bomb towns held by rebels; a four-day truce for a Muslim holiday fails. **November:** The National Coalition of Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces is formed at a meeting in Doha, Qatar; Israeli artillery units shell Syrian troops in the Golan Heights in retaliation for shots fired across the cease-fire line. **December:** The Western powers recognize the Syrian National Coalition as representative of the Syrian people; the number of refugees surpasses the 500,000 mark, with the internally displaced number estimated at 2 million.

2013 January: Bombings at Aleppo University kill dozens. **February:** Syria's violence spills into Lebanon, with sectarian clashes in Tripoli, Lebanon; rebels seize control of Tabqa Dam, the country's major generator of hydroelectricity. **March:** Rebel forces take over al-Raqqa, a provincial capital; the number of refugees exceeds 1 million as the exodus accelerates; rebels and the government accuse one another of using chemical weapons; the opposition Syrian National Coalition is allowed to represent Syria at an Arab League summit in Qatar. **May:** Israel attacks military installations near Damascus, which is seen as an effort to prevent Iranian missiles from reaching Hizballah in Lebanon. **May–June:** Hizballah fighters join Syrian government forces in a battle to expel rebels from Qusayr, a strategic town near the Lebanese border.

Introduction

In 2011, massive protest movements that appeared to come out of nowhere caught the Arab world's autocrats by surprise and brought down powerful leaders in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Yemen. After nearly half a century of Ba'th Party rule, Syrians shared the same grievances as Arabs elsewhere: corruption, economic stagnation, repression, and no hope for a better future under regimes that were effective at little but clinging to power. President Bashar al-Asad had succeeded his father 11 years earlier and proved a fast learner in the ways of handling foreign and domestic challenges to the regime. What he did not learn was how to cope with a sustained uprising that represented the broad Arab mood of the moment; deep-rooted resentments toward one-party, indeed one-family, rule; and forces that his own misbegotten policies generated.

Thousands of Syrians took to the streets in March 2011, calling for the "fall of the regime," the popular slogan of Arab uprisings, but they found themselves confronting a determined foe willing to slaughter thousands of citizens and destroy entire city neighborhoods to remain in power. In its first two years, the Syrian Uprising evolved from confrontations between peaceful demonstrators and security forces into a civil war pitting an array of militias against the Syrian Armed Forces, including its air and naval power. The uprising's political dimension became more complex as it shifted from demands for reforming, to toppling the regime, and then to a sectarian conflict between Sunni Muslims and Alawis. Efforts by the Arab League and the United Nations (UN) to stop the violence and craft a political solution for Syria foundered on the intransigence of the Asad regime and its opponents. The responses of regional and international powers bolstered hard-line positions on both sides. The government enjoyed firm support from Russia, Iran, and Hizballah, as well as diplomatic backing in the United Nations from China. The opposition had the wealthy Arab Gulf states, Turkey, the United States, and the European Union on its side. By the middle of 2013, Syria was in the midst of a nightmarish civil war marked by more than 80,000 deaths, sectarian massacres, the flight of one-fourth the country's population from their homes, the disintegration of government institutions in much of the country, and a rising humanitarian crisis as food, medicine, and electricity supplies dwindled. No one in Syria or the outside world was in a position to stop what looked like a fight to the bitter end, at whatever cost to the country.

LAND AND PEOPLE

The modern nation of Syria lies between Turkey in the north, Iraq in the east, Jordan in the south, Israel in the southwest, and Lebanon in the west. Before the 20th century, it was rarely independent; rather, larger empires often ruled the country. The term *Syria*, or its Arabic equivalent, *bilad al-sham*, refers to a broad region encompassing the modern nations of Jordan, Israel, Lebanon, Syria, and the Turkish province of Hatay. Writers refer to Syria in the broader sense as geographical Syria, historical Syria, or Greater Syria. Unless otherwise noted, this work restricts itself to Syria in its contemporary dimensions.

Syria's land area measures 185,170 square kilometers (71,500 square miles), roughly the size of North Dakota. The country can be divided into four major geographical zones that run from north to south. First is a narrow strip along the Mediterranean. The coastal plain varies in width, from nearly 30 kilometers to a few hundred meters. This area's climate consists of mild winters with fairly abundant rainfall and hot, humid summers. The greatest amount of precipitation falls in the north and decreases farther south. The second major zone consists of three mountain ranges that rise abruptly above the coastal plain. In the north, the Amanus Mountains have peaks that rise more than 1,600 meters. The Baylan Pass through the Amanus range is the main route between Aleppo and its historical port, Antioch. South of that pass is the Aqra range, which stretches from Antioch through Latakia province to Tripoli in Lebanon. Within this range is the Jabal Ansariyya, a mostly Alawi and Christian region. The Aqra range ends at the Homs Gap, the major land route between Homs and Tripoli. The southernmost range is the Anti-Lebanon Mountains, which run through Syria and Lebanon and have peaks as high as 3,600 meters. These mountain ranges are marked by their own particular climate. They have cold winters with frequent snowfall and the heaviest rainfall in the country. During the summer, the days are hot and the nights cool. The third major zone is a broad interior plain on the eastern side of the mountains. It stretches from Aleppo in the north to the Hawran in the south and is the site of the country's major towns and cities: Aleppo, Hama, Homs, and Damascus. Some parts of this zone receive a fair amount of rainfall, which decreases farther inland. Winters are mild, and summers are hot and dry. The last main region is the Syrian Desert, which is actually an extension of the vast Arabian Desert and occupies the largest portion of the country in the east and south. The desert receives little rain and has cold winters and hot, dry summers. In the north, the desert is bisected by the Euphrates River, the waters of which have been used to irrigate fields since

ancient times. Approaching the Turkish border, there is higher and more regular rainfall, and the desert merges with a semiarid steppe in the region known as Jazira.

Syria's main river is the Euphrates, which flows southwest from Turkey through Syria and into Iraq. Two important tributaries of the Euphrates are the Khabur River and Balikh River. The Orontes River courses in a northerly direction through central Syria beneath the eastern slopes of Jabal Ansariyya. The Barada River, although relatively small, has been of great importance in Syria's history because it provides water to one of the country's two major cities, Damascus. The other major city, Aleppo, lies near the Quwayq River.

The population is approaching 23 million and increasing at an annual rate of just less than 2 percent. About 85 percent of the population is Arab; roughly 10 percent is Kurdish, many of whom are Arabized or can speak Arabic; and about 4 percent are Armenian. In religious terms, close to 75 percent of Syrians are Sunni Muslims; the Alawis, an offshoot of Shi'i Islam, constitute about 12 percent of the population. Christians account for perhaps 10 percent and Druzes for 3 percent of the total population. Isma'ilis, Twelver, or Imami Shi'is; Yazidis; and Jews comprise a tiny minority. The distribution of different language and religious groups is quite varied. The Druzes and Alawis, for instance, both Arabic speakers, each comprise the overwhelming majority in particular regions, while Christians and Sunnis are dispersed throughout various towns and rural districts. The Kurds have been concentrated in Jazira in the northeast, while most Armenians live in Aleppo and Damascus. For much of Syrian history, remote areas have provided refuges for members of religious minorities. Sunni rulers would occasionally try to impose their authority, but, in general, it was not until the 20th century that the Druzes, the Alawis, and the Arab and Kurdish inhabitants of Jazira lost their communal autonomy. The political integration of Syria's diverse population under urban Sunni domination occurred during the French Mandate and early independence years. In the 1960s, provincial Sunnis and members of minorities turned the tables by seizing power through control over the military and the Ba'th Party. Forging a common Syrian identity is an ongoing project that the government fosters through education and the media. Social interaction among Syrians of different religious backgrounds certainly became more frequent, and a secular culture made inroads, but communal boundaries remained firm when it comes to marriage.

Syria has a long record of economic integration and cultural coherence rooted in its ancient cities. The major cities—Aleppo, Hama, Homs, and Damascus—have perennially serviced long-distance trade along two distinct axes: a north-south axis from the Indian Ocean, Yemen, and Arabia to Asia Minor and the Mediterranean, and an east-west axis from Iran and Iraq to Egypt and the Mediterranean. Urban merchants organized, financed, and conducted long-distance trade and used the wealth it generated to develop a

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thriving urban culture. In addition to the cities' role in trade, they served as the centers of political power over the surrounding countryside. The rulers resided in the main towns and extracted the agricultural surplus from the numerically dominant, yet politically subordinate, peasantry of surrounding villages. This surplus fed the inhabitants of Syria's main cities and supplied raw materials for artisanal manufactures, particularly textiles and leather goods. It also provided the chief source of rulers' wealth. They lavished their fortunes on monumental construction; more modest, but necessary, urban infrastructure (aqueducts, roads, defenses); and conspicuous consumption, which stimulated manufacturing. The cultural coherence, if not unity, of the Syrian polity and economy is evident in the mobility of rulers, soldiers, traders, artisans, laborers, and peasants, who would find similar conditions wherever they went.

In addition to townsmen and villagers, the nomadic Bedouin of the desert formed yet another component of Syria's population. While the various tribes preserved their distinctive way of life—reliance on livestock and seasonal migration, as well as independence from outside political authority—they also formed a part of Syrian society and culture since at least early Islamic times. In the first century of Muslim rule, Bedouin tribesmen formed the shock troops of conquest and consolidation of Arab authority. Throughout history, they supplied animal products (hides, dairy products, meat) to townsmen and villagers, and transported merchandise in long-distance caravans. In the domain of culture, the Bedouin embodied the ideals of honor, bravery, and independence, the notion of an Arab way of life inherited from the pre-Islamic past that was diluted in the Muslim empires' effete cities. Moreover, the Bedouin were considered the bearers and preservers of "pure" Arabic language, uncontaminated by contact with non-Arabic speakers. For centuries, their classical poetry stood as the model to which later creative efforts would be compared. In contrast to this romanticized concept of the Bedouin, settled folk held them in contempt for the threat they posed to village and town, for another pattern in Syrian history is the fluctuation of the boundary between the desert and the sown, a flux that has occurred under both natural and political pressures. When central authority was weak or a series of droughts made marginal lands unproductive, the Bedouin would advance with their herds to graze at the walls of the towns, forcing peasants to abandon villages. But during times of strong dynasties or abundant rains, the boundary would creep eastward, and the Bedouin would retreat.

ANCIENT HISTORY

Archaeological research shows that Syria's history stretches back 4,500 years, during which time the country has witnessed the rise and fall of many kingdoms, empires, and dynasties, as well as numerous invasions. Nonetheless, certain patterns are evident that distinguish Syria from other parts of the Middle East. Its location at the crossroads of Western Asia, Northern Africa, Arabia, and the Eastern Mediterranean and its lack of protective topography have made the country vulnerable to invasion and open to more peaceful migration. Movements of different peoples throughout the centuries have resulted in the formation of a diverse population. This diversity has been further accentuated by the presence of several physically isolated regions; the lack of a unifying river system, for example, the Nile in Egypt or the Tigris-Euphrates in Iraq; and barriers to travel, including mountains, desert, and great distances between towns. Such internal diversity has contributed to a history marked by swings between periods of political unification and fragmentation. In addition, Syria has been the object of domination by more powerful neighbors in Egypt, Iraq, and Asia Minor (present-day Turkey) from ancient times to the present. Consequently, periods of Syrian unity and independence have been the historical exception rather than the rule. Since the Arab conquest in the 7th century, there have been only three unified, independent polities: the Umayyad dynasty from 661 to 750; the regime of the Nur al-Din Mahmud in the 12th century; and in modern times since 1946. Syria has otherwise been politically fragmented or ruled from Baghdad (c. 750–908), Cairo (1171–1516), Istanbul (1516–1918), and Paris (1920–1946).

The earliest Syrian civilization flourished in the vicinity of Aleppo at the ancient city of Ebla, in Arabic, Tell Mardikh. Archaeologists discovered this ancient city in 1974 and have uncovered 15,000 tablets from the Ebla archives that date to around 2400 BC. The tablets, inscribed in Sumerian cuneiform, mostly pertain to economic and administrative matters and attest to a flourishing trade with Egypt and Mesopotamia, as well as textile and agricultural production. The tablets' language, Eblaite, is the oldest Semitic language of western Syria.

Another early center of civilization was founded in the 3rd millennium BC by a Mesopotamian people, the Akkadians, at Mari, located on the middle Euphrates River. Mari thus initially represented an extension of Mesopotamian civilization, but around 2100 BC, the Amorites took it over. These people were nomads of the Syrian Desert who gradually shifted to settled life and established a number of city-states between 2100 and 1800 BC. In 1933, archaeologists discovered the Mari archives, which contain 20,000 clay tablets inscribed in Akkadian cuneiform dating from an 18th-century BC kingdom. During the first centuries of the 2nd millennium BC other Amorite

kingdoms flourished in northern Syria, the most eminent one being the Yamkhad kingdom that ruled from Aleppo between 1800 and 1650. That period coincides with the greatest activity at Ugarit, in Arabic, Ras Shamra, a commercial center on the northern Syrian coast. Its good harbor and proximity to Crete and Cyprus made it an entrepôt for trade between the Mediterranean and Mesopotamia. There followed more than four centuries of domination by outside powers that established tributary relations with several regional polities. Pharaonic Egypt dominated the southern half of Syria from 1650 until 1200. The northern parts came under the hegemony of the Mitanni kingdom, a northern Mesopotamian power, and then, beginning in 1350, the Anatolian Hittite kingdom held sway.

Between 1200 and 1000, Syrian history is more obscure because of the change in writing materials from durable tablets to perishable papyrus and skins. At the beginning of the period, Ugarit was destroyed, either by raiding Sea Peoples or by earthquake. The key development in these dark ages was the gradual migration of the Aramaeans from the south. Beginning around 1000, their city-states dominated Syria for nearly three centuries. The most important Aramaean centers were at Damascus, Hama, and Aleppo, where they built the renowned citadel that still rises above the town. In Damascus, the Aramaeans constructed a temple for their deity, Baal-Haddad, on a site that would later become the church of John the Baptist and, for the last 1,300 years, the Umayyad Mosque. The greatest contribution of the Aramaeans to the ancient world was their language, Aramaic, which became a cosmopolitan language for trade throughout the ancient Middle East and Mediterranean. The Aramaeans also spread the Phoenician alphabet of 30 letters, which other peoples borrowed and adapted to write Hebrew, Arabic, Persian, and Sanskrit. The Syriac dialect of Aramaic spoken at the northern town of Edessa became the liturgical language of Christians, and the term *Syrian* first referred to speakers of the Syriac language. To this day, the Syrian Orthodox Christian Church uses Syriac in its liturgy, and an Aramaic dialect is still spoken in a few Syrian towns.

In 732, the Assyrians conquered the Aramaean city-states and ruled Syria until 612, when Babylonian and then Neo-Babylonian invaders established their rule. In 538, Cyrus the Great, founder of the Persian Achaemenid dynasty, absorbed Syria into the first empire to rule the entire Middle East from Egypt to the eastern borders of Iran. Persian rule lasted until Alexander the Great's conquest in 333–332. After Alexander's death in 323, his general, Antigonus, ruled Syria from Asia Minor, but, in 301, his rivals, the Seleucids, took over the province. Seleucus established towns named for his father, Antiochus (Antioch), his mother, Laodicea (Latakia), and his wife, Apamia. The Seleucids made Damascus their western capital and presided over an era of commercial expansion and Greek colonization, which gave rise to Hellenistic culture, a mixture of Greek, North African, and Western

Asian cultures. Greek urban colonies had baths, theaters, as well as other Hellenic institutions; yet, the Aramaic language and culture persisted among most Syrians throughout this period. In 312, the Seleucids established an outpost on the Euphrates River called Dura Europos. The town was later ruled by the Persians, then the Romans, and finally destroyed by the Persians in AD 256; discovered in 1920, Dura Europos is now famous for its Jewish synagogue and Christian chapel. During the Seleucid era, the Nabataeans created the first major Arab polity around 312 BC, based on the towns of Bosra in southern Syria and Petra in present-day Jordan.

Seleucid power rapidly declined until the Ptolemies of Egypt seized Syria. Between 240 and 198, Syria was a province of Egypt. The Romans conquered Syria in 64 BC, and they converted the temple of Baal in Damascus into a temple for Jupiter. During the Roman period, another independent Arab kingdom of the desert appeared at Palmyra, which gained importance after the fall of the Nabataeans in AD 106. Known as the “Bride of the Desert” and located 230 kilometers northeast of Damascus, Palmyra prospered as the center of trade between Mesopotamia and the Mediterranean. Although the Romans declared it part of their Syrian province in 64 BC, Palmyrenes maintained a semiautonomous status and developed one of the region’s wealthiest cities. Palmyra’s most famous ruler, Queen Zenobia, launched a revolt against Roman rule from 268 to 272, when her armies occupied Egypt and Asia Minor. A Roman counterattack put down the Palmyrene queen and ended up destroying much of the city.

The next major political development was the 4th-century establishment of Byzantium as the successor to Rome. For 300 years, the Christian Byzantines ruled Syria from Constantinople. They destroyed Jupiter’s temple and made it a church for John the Baptist. In the 6th century, the Byzantines supported an Arab vassal state under the Ghassanids, Arab Christians living on the southern fringes of Syria.

ISLAMIC PERIOD

The first Muslim ventures into Syria were minor raids during the Prophet Muhammad’s lifetime and under the first caliph, Abu Bakr. An organized invasion (634–641) to conquer Syria took place under the second caliph, Umar, with the main battles between Byzantine and Arab forces taking place between 634 and 637. On the heels of military triumphs came large-scale immigration from Arabia and consolidation of control over Syria. For the next quarter century, the nascent Arab empire based in the western Arabian town of Medina ruled Syria, Egypt, and Iraq, and then the Umayyad dynasty established itself in Damascus and ruled the Arab empire for 90 years, the

only time that Syria was the center of an empire. In 750, the Abbasid dynasty supplanted the Umayyads and transferred the imperial center to Iraq. Syria remained under firm Abbasid control for about a century, until provincial governors in Egypt asserted control over the country and their autonomy from Baghdad intermittently between 868 and 971.

During the later 10th and 11th centuries, Syria underwent one of its periods of fragmentation. The Fatimid dynasty in Egypt; the Saljuk sultans, who attained ascendance over the Abbasids in Baghdad; the Hamdanids in Aleppo; and a resurgent Byzantine Empire contended for control over the country. In the closing years of the 11th century, Saljuk princes and vassals were ruling several petty states and feuding with one another when the Crusaders invaded, determined to regain the Holy Land for Christendom. In the early 12th century, the Crusaders set up four Latin kingdoms, while in the Muslim arena, power passed from Saljuk princes to their regents, called Atabegs. For 50 years, the Atabegs warred with one another as often as with the Franks until Nur al-Din Mahmud consolidated power over most of Muslim Syria in 1154. His vassal, Saladin, later established the Ayyubid dynasty, which ruled Egypt and Syria from Cairo. This Muslim hero of Kurdish background stabilized the Muslim-Christian balance of power, but the political foundations he laid dissolved 70 years after his death, and, in 1260, the Ayyubids gave way to the Mamluk sultanate, a unique polity based on the creation of households of slave soldiers loyal to the sultan, who himself had to rise from the ranks of former slaves.

In a sense, the Mamluks came on the scene in the nick of time, as Syria faced a threat far more potent and destructive than the Crusaders ever posed. Two years earlier, Mongol invaders from Central Asia had sacked Baghdad and exterminated the Abbasid caliphate; in 1260, a Mongol army invaded Syria, swept away the Ayyubid principalities, and marched into Palestine. That same year, however, a Mamluk force ventured from Egypt to confront the Mongols and dealt them their first military defeat. In repulsing the Mongols, the Mamluks spared Syria the destructive consequences of Mongol rule that would plague Iraq and Iran for centuries. The Mamluks also uprooted the last stronghold of the Crusaders in 1303. Two centuries later, in 1516, the Mamluks fell to a different northern invader, the Ottoman dynasty, which had also vanquished the last vestiges of Byzantine power in 1453, when it seized Constantinople (Istanbul). For the next 400 years, Syria was part of a vast empire that ruled over much of Southeastern Europe, the central Arab lands to the Indian Ocean, Egypt, and North Africa to the frontier of Morocco.

In the context of Syrian history, the Ottoman era is conspicuous for bringing security from invasion and a long period of uninterrupted dynastic rule. Under these conditions, Syria enjoyed stability and prosperity reflected in population growth, urban dynamism, and expansion of the margins of culti-

vation. The Ottomans initially divided Syria into three provinces, each with a governor and garrison of janissaries to represent central authority. The northern one had its center at Aleppo, the southern one at Damascus, and a coastal one at Sidon. The Ottomans further divided these provinces into districts. Syria's distance from Istanbul and the strength of local forces compelled the Ottomans to rule in cooperation with urban notables and rural magnates. In the 18th century, the balance of power shifted in favor of local forces, and the Ottomans appointed Syrian Arabs as governors of the province of Damascus. Ottoman vulnerability increased in the early 19th century, and the ambitious governor of Egypt, Muhammad Ali, exploited the situation when he had his army invade at the end of 1831. Egyptian rule lasted until the European powers forcibly imposed an Ottoman restoration in 1840. There followed a lengthy period of administrative and legal reform punctuated by outbreaks of communal violence in Aleppo (1850) and Damascus (1860). By 1900, however, Syria was more firmly tied to Istanbul because of faster transport and communications, as well as more effective administration.

MODERN ERA

The French Mandate

In November 1914, the Ottoman Empire entered World War I on the side of the Entente, and Syria became exposed to a possible British invasion from Egypt. Around the same time, British diplomats struck an alliance with the Hashemite sharif of Mecca, Husayn ibn Ali, and incited him to launch an Arab revolt against Ottoman rule in exchange for a promise to support the establishment of an independent Arab kingdom. The war concluded with the complete withdrawal of Ottoman forces from Syria. Husayn's son Faysal asserted Syrian independence in the name of a recently developed political ideology, Arab nationalism, but the fragile state was snuffed out by a French invasion in July 1920. This was followed by a quarter century of French rule under a mandate from the League of Nations and a struggle for Syrian unity and independence.

The unity of Greater Syria was shattered in 1920, when Great Britain assumed a separate mandate over Palestine and Transjordan (southern Syria), and France detached portions of Syria and annexed them to Lebanon. The French then further divided Syria by creating separate administrations for the southern Druze and the northwestern Alawi regions. A great uprising broke out in 1925, sparked by a Druze revolt, and the French took nearly two years to suppress it. There followed a decade of political struggle between France and Syrian nationalists, who formed the National Bloc to pursue their aims. The first contentious issue was the drafting of a constitution. France rejected

a draft proposed by an elected Constituent Assembly dominated by the National Bloc, but, in 1930, it promulgated a constitution largely based on the Bloc's proposal. The next task was the negotiation of a treaty to govern relations between an independent Syria and France. The nationalists and the French could not reach agreement on terms until France agreed to reincorporate the Druze and Alawi regions with the rest of the country in 1936, a watershed year for the mandate. That same year, national elections to parliament brought the National Bloc to power for the first time, but the nationalists were to savor their triumph briefly, as they encountered difficulties in governing the Druze and Alawi districts, as well as the restive Jazira province. To make matters worse, Turkey asserted its claim to Alexandretta, and, in 1939, France allowed its annexation to Turkey in yet another blow to Syrian unity. Moreover, at the end of 1938, the French parliament refused to ratify the Franco-Syrian Treaty of 1936. As World War II approached, the National Bloc fell from power, and political stalemate resumed.

The fall of France to Germany in 1940, however, fundamentally weakened France's position in Syria, where a pro-Vichy administration assumed authority. The British regarded this regime as a threat to their positions in Iraq and Palestine, so they cooperated with Free French Forces under Charles de Gaulle in invading Syria in the summer of 1941. Before and after the invasion, Free French leaders declared their commitment to immediate independence for Syria, but once in control again, they temporized. It took a combination of nationalist pressure and British intervention to get the French to allow national elections in preparation for independence in July 1943. But even then, the French stalled on withdrawing their forces before they obtained a treaty to guarantee their special status in an independent Syria. The nationalists' refusal to buckle under French pressure led to a new crisis in May 1945, when French warplanes bombed Damascus. At that point, Great Britain, whose troops vastly outnumbered the French forces, forcibly intervened to wrest a commitment from France to evacuate the country. On 17 April 1946, the last French troops left, and Syria was free and independent under an elected government.

Independence

The nation had been independent barely two years when events in Palestine plunged Syria into its first war. The creation of the Jewish state of Israel in what was still a predominantly Arab country precipitated military intervention by nearby Arab states. The newly created Syrian Army fought the Israelis but, like the armies of Egypt and Transjordan, failed to establish Arab control over Palestine. At the end of the war, Syrian and Israeli representatives met under UN auspices and negotiated an armistice that provided for the creation of demilitarized zones in disputed territory along the frontier.

Another consequence of the war was the flight of 100,000 Palestinian refugees to Syria. The government tried to make the army a scapegoat for the military failure, and, in March 1949, the army struck back with a military coup against the elected government. This event marked the beginning of military intervention in Syrian politics. By the end of the year, two more military coups would occur.

The mastermind of 1949's third coup, Adib al-Shishakli, managed to remain in power from December 1949 until February 1954. Following his overthrow, Syria saw the rise and fall of seven cabinets in four years. Internally, the major issue was social reform, particularly in rural areas, where most of the peasantry lived under landlord domination. In foreign relations, the major questions were Syria's alignment in the Arab world and in the Cold War between the superpowers. Egypt and Iraq were the leading Arab powers, and each country sought an advantage by strengthening ties with Syria. Some Syrian politicians favored unity with Iraq, while Egypt and Saudi Arabia supported politicians who opposed alignment with Iraq. Superpower rivalries were imposed on these regional contests, as Great Britain and the United States favored pro-Western politicians who tended to look to Iraq for support, while the Soviet Union encouraged neutralist Syrians relying on Egypt to fend off Iraqi bids for union. In the arena of popular opinion, the neutralists, spearheaded by the Arab nationalist Ba`th Party, were gaining in popularity, and in the fractious officer corps, neutralist sentiment was predominant. Western pressures mounted throughout the period. First, there was a campaign in 1955 to enlist Syria's adherence to the Baghdad Pact, an alliance of Turkey, Iraq, and Great Britain, but Egyptian support and American hesitation allowed Syria to abstain from joining. In 1956, Iraq and Britain tried to organize a pro-Western coup, but the plot was uncovered and its organizers arrested. Syria then turned to the Soviet Union for diplomatic and economic support, as well as military supplies, but this alarmed the United States, whose leadership became convinced that Syria was on the verge of becoming a satellite of Moscow. A full-blown crisis between the United States and Syria erupted in August 1957, when the Syrians expelled three American diplomats for conspiring with politicians and army officers against the government. Washington then persuaded Turkey to mass its troops along the border, a move to which the Soviets responded by threatening Turkey should it attack Syria.

The crisis strengthened the position of those Syrian politicians and army officers who looked to Egypt as a shield against Western threats, and, in February 1958, a Syrian delegation to Cairo negotiated a merger with Egyptian president Gamal Abd al-Nasser, forming the United Arab Republic. This experiment in Arab unity lasted three and a half years. It foundered on Syrian resentment of Egyptian political and economic domination, and, in September 1961, a secessionist coup took Syria out of the union. In the next 18

months, three successive civilian politicians governed a restive country and confronted constant interference from army officers and subversion inspired by the Egyptians. Attempts to curb the military's influence on politics led to the March 1963 coup d'état by Nasserist and Ba`thist officers. By August, the Ba`thists had purged the Nasserist officers and suppressed a Nasserist uprising, thereby inaugurating the era of Ba`th Party domination of Syrian politics.

The 1963 "Ba`thist revolution" fundamentally reshaped Syrian politics in that it marked the definitive defeat of the elite political class that had emerged in late Ottoman times, led the struggle for independence, and headed civilian governments since 1946. Power now shifted to men of more humble social origins, many of whom were members of religious minorities. But the concentration of power in the Ba`th did not spell the end of political turmoil, for a new phase of struggle within and for control of the Ba`th commenced, and sectors of urban society revolted against its rule. Meanwhile, the new regime pursued an ambitious policy of social and economic reform, including land reform and nationalization of industries and businesses. In February 1966, the intraparty conflict resulted in yet another coup, the expulsion from Syria of the party's founders, and the ascendance of its radical wing, dubbed the "Neo-Ba`th." This regime marked the furthest swing to the left Syria would see. It deepened the state's control over the economy in the name of socialism, advocated the overthrow of Arab regimes in the name of revolution, and backed Palestinian guerrilla raids against Israel; in fact, the Neo-Ba`th's provocations of Israel played a key role in precipitating the June 1967 War, in which Syria lost territory, the Golan Heights, to Israeli forces. After the war, new strains appeared within the regime, and, in November 1970, yet another coup d'état resolved intraparty struggle in favor of Hafiz al-Asad, the Syrian president for nearly 30 years.

The Hafiz al-Asad Era

The Asad regime backed away from its predecessor's unbridled radicalism in the domestic arena and foreign relations. Asad adopted slightly more liberal economic policies to soften urban middle-class resentment, while maintaining the state's domination of the economy. He also broadened the spectrum of allowable political discourse, yet retained a monopoly on power, and he mended ties with Arab governments. His handling of foreign policy bore fruit in the military cooperation he forged with Egyptian president Anwar Sadat. The two leaders planned a successful surprise attack on Israel in the October 1973 War, with the aim of recovering territories lost in the 1967 conflict. The military performance gained Asad credibility in Syria, but it did not succeed in recovering the Golan Heights. Two years later, his attention would be absorbed by the civil war in Lebanon, and he decided to send in a

large portion of the Syrian Army in June 1976, to prevent the rout of conservative, mostly Christian, forces. Asad's Lebanon policy and his reliance on repressive means to stay in power fueled Sunni resentment, which exploded in the Islamist uprising of 1978–1982. This revolt posed a serious threat to Asad's rule, but he suppressed it by thoroughly destroying its armed partisans in Hama in February 1982. Syria had no sooner passed through its worst internal crisis when Israel invaded Lebanon four months later in an effort to expel the Palestine Liberation Organization from that country and install a government friendly to the Jewish state. Syrian forces fought the Israelis for a few days and then accepted a cease-fire and watched the Israeli siege of Beirut force a Palestinian evacuation. In the long run, however, Asad reversed the military verdict through constant pressure on Israel via his Lebanese allies, and, by early 1986, Syria again exercised the dominant role in Lebanon.

Throughout the Ba`thist era, Syria was closely aligned with the Soviet Union and on shaky ground with the United States because of the latter's massive military, political, and economic support for Israel. As the Cold War entered its denouement and Soviet support for Syria slackened, it appeared that the Asad regime might be fatally weakened in a manner similar to the Soviets' Eastern European satellites. This calculation turned out to be mistaken; indeed, Asad improved relations with Washington in 1990, when he supported American intervention against the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. After the Gulf War, Asad furthered the rehabilitation of relations with the United States when he agreed to attend the Madrid Conference, an international peace conference to begin a negotiated settlement of the Arab–Israeli conflict in all its dimensions. While this diplomatic process did not bear fruit on the Syrian–Israeli track, Asad demonstrated his commitment to it and prepared his country for the day it would peacefully coexist with its perennial enemy. In spite of concentrated U.S. diplomatic efforts and extensive Syrian and Israeli negotiations during the 1990s, the two sides failed to reach agreement before Asad died in June 2000.

The vicissitudes of negotiations with the United States and Israel dominated the headlines in the 1990s, but within Syria the more fundamental issue was how to address endemic and urgent economic difficulties. The country had embraced five-year plans and government domination of major sectors in the 1960s to advance the economy and more equally spread the fruits of growth. Syria was able to offset the intrinsic flaws of centrally planned economies because it had access to two significant sources of financial support. The Soviet Bloc provided military, technical, and economic assistance, and oil-producing Arab countries offered billions of dollars in direct aid to Syria because of its role in confronting Israel, especially after Egypt signed a separate peace with Israel in 1979. These external streams of funds dried up in the 1980s when an oil glut depressed petroleum prices and when the

Soviet Union entered its last years of crisis. The collapse of the Soviet Bloc removed an important bulwark for Syria's centrally planned economy, and many Syrians hoped the government would adopt not only market reforms, but even steps toward a liberal political system. The Asad regime, however, remained intent on keeping its grip on power; therefore, its economic policies in the 1990s amounted to applying stopgap solutions to immediate crises in foreign exchange and energy supplies and stopped far short of structural adjustment along the lines recommended by the International Monetary Fund. The political situation changed even less, as the state of emergency imposed in 1963 persisted with its restrictions on civil liberties and the apparatus of security forces to ensure citizens' acquiescence.

Some observers believed that the economic and political stalemate might loosen after Hafiz al-Asad's death on 10 June 2000. Since his first brush with serious illness in 1983, Syria-watchers speculated on what would happen at the moment of succession. No one knew who would succeed Asad or how the transfer of power would take place: in a smooth legal fashion, or by violent means. Most analysts predicted a tumultuous period of internal struggle, but Bashar al-Asad succeeded his father without incident.

The Bashar al-Asad Era

Under the new president, Syrians enjoyed a brief experiment with a wider measure of political expression, the so-called Damascus Spring of 2000–2001. The old guard was determined to block any movement toward deeper change that might imperil its grip on power. Hence, President Asad cracked down on activists and dissidents, subjecting them to harassment, imprisonment, and mistreatment. Thereafter, he periodically reiterated promises to open up political life when he deemed the country ready for it, but no sooner, as he justified the retention of a system of emergency laws, state security courts, and secret police on the pretext of fighting Islamist extremism and foreign threats. As for economic policy, Asad recognized the necessity to open the economy to foreign investment and private initiative to cope with Syria's rapidly growing population. The prospect of reviving peace talks with Israel vanished upon the eruption of violence between Israel and Palestinians after the failure of their own efforts to reach a final peace settlement. On the regional scene, Syria's position suffered a blow in March–April 2003, when the United States invaded Iraq and overthrew the regime of Saddam Husayn. Bold talk in Washington about toppling other one-party regimes, like Ba`th Party rule in Damascus, gave rise to a bunker mentality in Syria's ruling circles.

On 14 February 2005, former Lebanese prime minister Rafiq al-Hariri was assassinated in a bombing in Beirut. Suspicion quickly fell on Damascus as the culprit. International pressure and the rapid spread of anti-Syrian demon-

strations in Lebanon caused the Asad regime to bow to demands to withdraw Syrian forces, first introduced in Lebanon 30 years earlier. The UN established a commission to investigate the Hariri murder. Its preliminary report concluded that figures in the Syrian government had a hand in the crime, and a number of European countries, as well as the United States, withdrew their ambassadors.

Meanwhile, Syria had to deal with the aftermath of the U.S. invasion of Iraq. More than 1 million refugees fled to Syria, putting strains on its economy, schools, health services, and housing. Washington suspected Damascus of abetting anti-American insurgents in Iraq and threatened to apply the policy of “regime change,” a euphemism for forceful overthrow, to Damascus, as it had done to Baghdad. By 2007, Asad had replaced several veteran advisers to his father with his own men, reorienting the regime more firmly on his immediate family and in-laws. As conditions in Iraq stabilized and the Americans wearied of fighting an Arab insurgency, alarm at the prospect of attack from that quarter waned, even though Syria weathered an Israeli raid on a suspected nuclear reactor site in 2007.

In January 2011, as popular revolts raged against authoritarian rulers in Tunisia and Egypt, Bashar al-Asad imagined that he was different because, in his mind, he was part of a regional bloc—Iran, Hizballah, and Hamas—that gave him legitimacy for opposing U.S. and Israeli positions. He also supposed that his economic reform measures were generating new prosperity evident in sumptuous shopping areas in Damascus and the growth of tourism. But he and his circle were oblivious to the ways that neo-liberal economic reforms had eroded the Ba`th Party’s ties with its historical social base, the provincial and rural communities that had reaped benefits from the equalizing and development policies of the 1960s and 1970s. Implementation of privatization in Syria was heavily skewed to benefit the president’s extended family, which assumed a dominant position in the most profitable sectors of the economy. Inflation and unemployment ravaged the urban middle classes scraping by on fixed wages. Starting in 2006, a terrible drought forced tens of thousands of Syrians off the land, resulting in the rise of belts of impoverished shantytowns around the major cities. The government was late to even recognize that it had a slow-motion natural disaster on its hands, utterly bereft of policies to address the crisis, let alone leadership to inspire a feeling of common interest in dealing with hardship.

When antigovernment protests broke out in Dar`a and spread to other towns, President Asad thought they were not the expression of genuine popular outrage at corruption and brutality, but part of a foreign conspiracy hatched by regional enemies. Nevertheless, he did acknowledge the need for reform and promised to enact measures that might have been welcome 10 years earlier but were now too late. Firm in the belief that security forces were grappling with terrorists and criminals, Asad resorted to fierce repres-

sion to put down protests. The uprising spread from one city to another, first in provincial centers like Baniyas, Idlib, Homs, Hama, and Dayr al-Zur, and then in the country's two major cities, Damascus and Aleppo. Soon, soldiers and officers unwilling to fire on unarmed civilians were defecting from the armed forces, and, in the summer of 2011, the Free Syrian Army appeared. President Asad's announcements of cabinet changes, amendments to the constitution, and parliamentary elections failed to stop the uprising. When he ordered the armed forces to retake cities seized by rebels, the terrible casualties and destruction caused more Syrians to take up arms against a regime determined to fight to the end.

By the start of 2012, the uprising had become a civil war raging in most of the country. As the ranks of rebel militias swelled and they gained experience fighting the army, the opposition gained the upper hand in the east and north, taking over border crossings with Iraq and Turkey and overrunning military bases and air fields. Meanwhile, violence and deterioration of the economy triggered internal displacement and an exodus of refugees. International diplomacy initiated by the Arab League and the UN had no effect on the fighting. Foreign powers sympathetic to the opposition tried to get the various political groups and militias inside and outside the country to form a coherent organization, first the Syrian National Council in the fall of 2011, and later the National Coalition of Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces in the fall of 2012. Neither organization proved capable of forging strong connections with opposition forces inside Syria or overcoming internal rivalries. Whether rebel militias will be able to inflict a decisive defeat on the Asad forces or the Asad forces can make a comeback and regain control over the country remains to be seen. For millions of Syrians, the civil war is a catastrophe that will take years to recover from, when it finally ends.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Before the advent of modernity, Syria's range of economic activities remained stable for millennia. The vast majority of Syrians resided in villages, where they cultivated cereals and legumes, tended orchards, and raised livestock. Annual rainfall normally sufficed to produce crops for subsistence and a surplus to either sell or cover tax obligations to political authorities. The size of harvests depended more on rain than variation in technical means. Centuries of tinkering and adaptation of tools to the natural environment led to a conservative approach that satisfied needs in most years. Experimentation could have threatened yields and was not common. With respect to energy, cultivation depended on human and animal power to plow fields and transport harvests from fields to home and urban markets. Pastoral nomadism

was another perennial feature of rural life. The lines between nomad and villager were not hard and fast. Villagers might have tilled fields belonging to nomadic chiefs and sent their livestock to graze pastures with animals belonging to nomads. Furthermore, the variable local effects of periodic droughts often parched the steppe and forced nomads to take up cultivation in villages, or, conversely, sometimes resulted in disastrous harvests that compelled cultivators to seek their livelihood as clients of nomadic tribes.

While most Syrians lived in the countryside, a significant portion, perhaps 15 percent during periods of political stability, resided in towns and cities. The urban economy had a vibrant manufacturing sector devoted to processing agricultural products into commodities, especially textiles from cotton and wool, but also animal products into leather. The artisans of Aleppo and Damascus, in particular, enjoyed a widespread reputation for the skill they applied to their work. Townsmen also worked in local and long-distance trade via caravans to other parts of the Middle East and African and Asian lands on the rim of the Indian Ocean. Commerce offered the best opportunities for accumulating wealth, and the urban elite tended to come from or have investments in that sector. It was common for traders to act as money-lenders to peasants in need of assistance to pay taxes or buy seed, and to small artisans seeking an advance to buy raw materials.

In the 19th century, Syria and the rest of the Middle East underwent momentous economic changes. The major shifts stemmed from incorporation into the capitalist economic networks emanating from Western Europe, which created a new structure of global wealth and power. Trade with Europe became a more important facet of Syria's economy, and that led to the cultivation of more crops for export, the decline of traditional artisanal production in the face of competition from European manufactures, and the rise of European investment in transportation and communications. By the early 20th century, the major cities had such amenities as electricity, streetlights, and trams.

During the period of French rule, Syria's economy showed the first signs of industrialization and the introduction of mechanical technology to agriculture. In addition, France's efforts to quell unrest extended to remote regions and the nomads, who, for the first time, were effectively brought under central political authority. The extension of railroads and introduction of motor vehicles meant that nomads lost their customary economic role of providing freight-bearing animals to the caravan trade. This combination of factors spelled the end of an ancient way of life. Some nomads continue to raise livestock in the steppe, but they frequently use pickup trucks to move their animals from one pasture to another.

The major transformation in economy and society, however, occurred after independence. Improvements in sanitation, transportation, and city services spurred migration from villages to towns and cities. By the end of the 20th

century, the concentration of population had shifted from rural to urban areas. Even in rural areas, the disappearance of the nomads, land reforms, and technical advances permanently altered the agricultural sector, even though it still employs a large share of Syrian labor. Perhaps the most notable change in the last 40 years has been the government's assumption of a central role in financing and marketing crops, providing technical assistance to cultivators and constructing dams and canals to increase the amount of land under irrigation.

The urban landscape has undergone even more dramatic transformation, most clearly in sheer size, as city dwellers burst out of medieval quarters in late Ottoman times and have since sprawled into what had been adjacent orchards and gardens. The modern urban economy spawned large factories employing an industrial labor force, and socialist policies spurred the creation of a vast network of public sector companies to complement the numerous government ministries, agencies, and bodies that provide low-paying but steady employment for a large portion of the labor force.

It is quite natural that Syrian society has undergone substantial change in tandem with economic change. One of the most conspicuous areas of social change is in the area of education. Throughout the Islamic period, it was common for townsmen to teach their children to memorize the Qur'an and learn the rudiments of writing and arithmetic to serve the needs of commerce. More advanced learning in Islamic jurisprudence and theology was available in schools known as madrasas. Christians and Jews pursued studies at their respective religious institutions. Starting in the 18th century, European and American missionaries founded schools that attracted Syrian Christian pupils. While such schools represented closer interaction with Europe, the first institutions resembling modern public schools created by the Ottomans in the 19th century were designed to meet the modern need for skilled administrators and loyal subjects. The next major change came in the 1960s, when the government placed all schools under the Ministry of Education to inculcate in young citizens a uniform national identity and political outlook. Apart from the development of a national education system for all children regardless of religion, the other major change in education has been the creation of universities to train specialists in medical, scientific, educational, and administrative fields. Syria's national education system has done fairly well at raising literacy rates, but the higher education system is hampered by outdated equipment, crowding, and the intrusion of politics into administrative and faculty affairs.

Along with urbanization, technical modernization, and national education, the role of religion in society has also changed from a conspicuous element of political authority under Muslim dynasties to a complicated and contested feature of public life in a secular republic. There is no question that religious observance remains important to millions of Muslims and Christians, and

that religious principles continue to govern common ideas of morality and justice. There has been a rupture, however, in the historical centrality and supremacy of Islam in a republic that promises to treat all citizens equally regardless of religion. Some conservative Muslims would argue that it is possible to restore Islam to a central place in politics and law without harming the rights of non-Muslim compatriots. They go so far as to assert that the excesses of authoritarian regimes would not occur under rulers answerable to Islam's ethical and legal requirements. In the contest between religious and secular forces, the latter triumphed in the early 1980s. For the next 30 years, Syria offered one of the most hospitable climates for religious minorities in the Middle East, notwithstanding the repressive political atmosphere. The violence and insecurity that has accompanied the Syrian Uprising, however, has accentuated sectarian feelings and spurred fears among religious minorities that the country could be headed toward rule by puritanical Sunnis hostile toward them.

PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES

In the two years after the outbreak of the Syrian Uprising in March 2011, the challenges confronting Syria have completely changed. It is no longer a matter of jobs, prices, and updating the infrastructure built during the heyday of Ba`th Party rule. The political, economic, and social institutions that were developed beginning in the early 1960s have come unraveled as government forces and rebel militias have been locked in a merciless fight to the death marked by unspeakable atrocities, sectarian massacres, and destruction of villages, towns, and urban quarters. The Syrian state has disappeared in much of the country; supplies of food, medicine, and electricity are scarce; and one-fourth of the population has fled their homes, becoming internally displaced or refugees in neighboring countries. On the regional stage, Syria has reverted to its role of the late 1940s and 1950s, as a divided, weak country whose various parties and factions have allied with foreign powers for advantage over local rivals. With the international powers divided into rival camps, each one supplying enough material support to its favorite to give the opposing sides the expectation that they will prevail, there is no end in sight to the fighting.

The primary challenge for Syrians more than two years into their nightmare is to find a way to end their stalemated conflict. If they can achieve that, they will confront reconstruction and reconciliation on a monumental scale, and that is probably the optimistic scenario. The darker prospects are shaky pacification under a weakened Asad or Ba`th Party regime lacking interna-

tional legitimacy, de facto partition into enclaves run by warlords, or a broader war involving any one or a combination of Lebanon, Israel, Jordan, and Turkey.

A

ABBASID DYNASTY. The greatest of the classical **Islamic** dynasties, the Abbasids overthrew the **Umayyad dynasty** and held the **caliphate** from 750 to 1258. Upon coming to power, they moved the political center of early Islamic civilization from Syria to **Iraq**, where they founded a new city, Baghdad, as the imperial capital in 754. During the first century of Abbasid rule, a number of revolts erupted in Syria. These represented resentment against Syria's reduction from imperial center to provincial status and attempts by Umayyad loyalists to regain power. Syria began to move out of the Abbasid orbit during the time of Ahmad ibn Tulun (d. 884), a **Turkish** soldier assigned the task of collecting revenue and keeping order in **Egypt** on behalf of the caliph. He quelled a number of revolts in Syria, extended his authority there, and made a show of loyalty to the caliph, but, in fact, he ruled as an autonomous governor and established the short-lived Tulunid dynasty (868–905), which reigned over Egypt and Syria.

The Abbasids regained control of Syria in 905 and ruled it directly for 30 years. Then, a military commander named Muhammad ibn Tughj (d. 945), whose ancestors came from eastern **Iran**, established another autonomous line of governors known as the Ikhshidids. Ibn Tughj first arrived in Syria in 910, as a deputy governor. He governed Syria effectively and cultivated allies at the Abbasid court in Baghdad to secure appointment as governor of Egypt and Syria, with the pre-Islamic Persian title of *ikhshid*. In the next decade, ibn Tughj consolidated control over Egypt and southern Syria (**Damascus** and **Palestine**), while acknowledging **Hamdanid** supremacy in the north. After his death, his successors governed much of Syria for another quarter century, until the **Qarmatis** dislodged them in 969. While the Abbasid caliphate endured in Baghdad for three more centuries, its effective rule of Syria was over.

ABDALLAH, ALI AL- (1950–). Writer and political activist. A native of **Dayr al-Zur**, Abdallah received a degree in philosophy from the University of **Damascus** before pursuing a career as a writer and political activist. In the early years of **Bashar al-Asad's** rule, he was detained several times for

criticizing government policies. In 2005, the dissident was arrested for his association with the **Damascus Declaration for National Democratic Change** and for engaging in antiregime activities through the Jamal al-Atasi Forum for Democratic Dialogue. After spending six months in prison, Abdallah was again arrested in March 2006, for protesting the harassment of political prisoners in front of a state security court. The following year, he was sentenced to two and a half years in jail for attempting to revive the Damascus Declaration during a meeting with fellow opposition members. He was set to be released in 2010; however, during his time in prison, he made controversial comments regarding the **corrupt** nature of Syrian–**Lebanese** relations and alleged electoral fraud in the 2009 **Iranian** elections. The remarks were enough to indict the activist for “spoiling Syria’s relations with another country,” and he was sentenced to another 18 months in prison. He was released on 4 June 2011, as part of a general amnesty declared by President Asad.

ABD AL-MALIK IBN MARWAN (c. 646–705). The fourth Umayyad caliph (r. 685–705). Abd al-Malik consolidated power for the Marwanid branch (named for his father) of the Umayyad dynasty. His first achievement was to reestablish authority over **Iraq**, which had thrown off Umayyad rule two years earlier. He prepared an assault on Iraq by arranging a truce with the **Byzantines** on his northern flank. He then led Syrian forces into Iraq and defeated his rivals in 691.

The following year, Abd al-Malik’s army overcame the forces of a rival claimant to the **caliphate** in Mecca. After suppressing challenges to the Umayyad dynasty, he placed its rule on firmer footing with a series of centralizing administrative reforms. First, he introduced Arabic as the **language** of administration, whereas previous caliphs had employed Greek and Persian scribes. Second, he ordered the minting of a new **Islamic** coinage to replace Byzantine gold and Persian silver coins. Abd al-Malik’s most enduring legacy stems from his order to construct the Dome of the Rock, Jerusalem’s chief Islamic religious complex, long considered the third holiest site in the Muslim world after the western Arabian shrines at Mecca and Medina.

ABDULHAMID II (1842–1918). **Ottoman** ruler from 1876 to 1909. Abdulhamid gained the throne on 1 September 1876, by agreeing with a powerful clique of military and civilian officials to promulgate a **constitution** for the Ottoman Empire. He indeed proclaimed the constitution on 23 December 1876, but he then dismissed from office the same men who had made him sultan. Abdulhamid did, however, proceed with constitutional government for a brief time. An elected bicameral parliament, which included nine depu-

ties from Syria, convened in March 1877. Less than a year later, on 14 February 1878, Abdulhamid dissolved parliament and suspended the constitution.

For most of Abdulhamid's reign, Syria saw little unrest, largely because of his strategy of combining a conservative religious policy of supporting popular Muslim institutions with technical modernization, which had commenced during the **Tanzimat** era. In pursuit of his religious policy, the sultan paid for the construction of many new mosques and patronized popular **Sufi** orders by funding the construction of new lodges, the repair of older ones, and the renovation of holy men's tombs. He also granted members of the Rifa'iyya Sufi order exemption from military service.

In the realm of modernization, provincial governors presided over the construction and, where needed, renovation of government offices, courts, and barracks. Urban renewal was another object of imperial attention, as rickety bazaars were demolished and reconstructed and rectilinear street systems were installed. Projects to develop the network of carriage roads, initiated by **Midhat Pasha**, continued throughout the 1880s. The sultan also granted concessions to European companies to construct **railways** and ports, and these projects gave a boost to **trade** by vastly reducing transport costs and time. Other modernizing ventures included the introduction of electricity to **Damascus** and the construction of a tramway in the city. Abdulhamid also oversaw the expansion of government schools throughout the province, including teacher training schools and a military preparatory school. The purpose of expanding state **education** was to discourage attendance at foreign mission schools, which did not inculcate loyalty to the sultan; in fact, **Christian** mission schools frequently encouraged allegiance to European nations.

Abdulhamid's reign was also important for Syria because he reorganized the provincial administration. He detached southern **Palestine** from Damascus in 1887, when he created a special district with its capital at Jerusalem. The following year, he created a coastal province extending from **Latakia** to Acre, with Beirut as the capital. This left a southern province centered on Damascus, stretching from **Hama** to Maan in present-day **Jordan**, and a northern province with **Aleppo** as its capital.

In the later years of Sultan Abdulhamid's reign, the Ottoman constitutional movement was revived by the **Committee of Union and Progress (CUP)**. This organization infiltrated the officer corps and recruited widely among younger men who believed in constitutional rule as the solution to the empire's many problems. In June 1908, the CUP inspired a number of mutinies in the Balkans, and, on 24 July 1908, the rebellious officers forced the sultan to restore the 1876 constitution. The following April, a conservative coup bent on restoring absolute power to Abdulhamid ousted the constitutional government in Istanbul and provincial centers, but the bid for an absolutist restoration ultimately failed when officers loyal to the constitution marched

on Istanbul. On 28 April 1909, the parliament deposed Sultan Abdulhamid, the last Ottoman sultan to effectively wield power, and exiled him, first to Salonika, and then in 1912 to a palace near Istanbul, where he died in February 1918. *See also* SAYYADI, ABU AL-HUDA AL- (1850–1909); TRANSPORTATION.

ABID, AHMAD IZZAT AL- (1851–1924). Syrian adviser to Ottoman sultan Abdulhamid II. Before his acquaintance with the sultan, Abid worked in the bureau of Turkish and Arabic correspondence and published the first private newspaper in Damascus from 1879 to 1887. He was serving as a judge on the central court of appeals in Istanbul when he entered the entourage of the sultan in 1894 through a connection with Abu al-Huda al-Sayyadi, another Syrian adviser at the imperial court. Abid became the most powerful figure in distributing posts, especially in the judicial administration in the Syrian provinces. He counseled the sultan to adopt pro-German and Pan-Islamic policies, but he is best known for developing the idea of a rail link between Damascus and Mecca to be constructed entirely with donations from Muslims. Known as the Hijaz Railway, this project was completed as far as Medina when it was terminated in 1908. After the 1908 constitutional revolution, Abid fled to Egypt, but he returned to the center stage of Ottoman political life at the end of World War I, when he became the grand vizier and negotiated the armistice.

ABID, MUHAMMAD ALI AL- (1868–1939). Son of Ahmad Izzat al-Abid and first president of the Syrian republic from 1932 to 1936. In the late Ottoman era, Abid served in a number of high government positions, including Ottoman minister to the United States, and he was closely associated with Sultan Abdulhamid II. From the time of the 1908 Ottoman constitutional revolution until 1919, Abid lived in Europe. He played little role in politics during the early years of the French Mandate. In November 1931, French high commissioner Henri Ponsot announced that national elections would be held in December 1931 through January 1932. The National Bloc won 17 of 69 seats, the remainder going to independents and figures willing to collaborate with the French. Under the constitution of 1930, the parliament elected the president of the republic. The National Bloc and the French authorities agreed on Abid as a compromise candidate in June 1932. The major political issue during his four-year term was the negotiation of a Franco-Syrian Treaty to regulate relations in the event of Syria attaining independence. In September 1936, a preliminary agreement on terms of the treaty was reached. National elections to parliament, which would have to ratify the

treaty, were held in November, and the National Bloc won a huge victory. When the nationalist parliament convened in December, Abid resigned the presidency to make way for Bloc leader **Hashim al-Atasi**.

ABU FIRAS AL-HAMDANI (932–968). Renowned poet and member of the **Hamdanid dynasty** that ruled northern Syria from **Aleppo**. Abu Firas's poetry celebrated the accomplishments of his kinsman Sayf al-Dawla, ruler of Aleppo from 945 to 967, whose entourage included the great poet **Abu al-Tayyib al-Mutanabbi**. Sayf al-Dawla appointed Abu Firas governor of Manbij, a district close to the frontier with the **Byzantines**. In the course of fighting these perennial enemies of the Muslims, the Hamdanid prince-poet was captured in 962. During his four-year captivity, Abu Firas composed some of his finest verse, much of which clearly shows al-Mutanabbi's influence. In 966, Sayf al-Dawla paid the Byzantines a ransom to free his cousin. Two years later, the ruler died and his son, Abu al-Ma'ali, took over Aleppo. Abu Firas quarreled with him and raised a revolt in **Homs**, but the ruler's troops captured and killed him.

ADONIS (1930–). Pen name of Ali Ahmad Sa'id, a leading poet and literary critic. Adonis was born in a small village near **Latakia** and studied philosophy and **literature** at the University of **Damascus**. In 1956, he moved to **Lebanon** to found a poetry journal. He soon gained a reputation for his free verse, symbolist poetry that explores political, social, and metaphysical concerns. In 1977, he published a landmark three-volume work on Arab culture entitled *The Permanent and the Changing: A Study of Arab Conformity and Creativity*. Since 1986, Adonis has been living in Paris. His poetry has been translated into more than a dozen **languages**. He is also one of the Arab world's leading literary critics, and his work *Introduction to Arab Poetics* (1991) has been translated into English and **French**.

AFLAQ, MICHEL (1910–1989). Cofounder of the **Ba'th Party**. A **Greek Orthodox Christian** native of **Damascus**, Aflaq studied at the Sorbonne in Paris from 1929 to 1934. Upon his return to Damascus to teach history at a public secondary school, he attracted pupils to his call for Arab unity, liberation from colonial rule, and social justice. In 1947, he and fellow school-teacher **Salah al-Din al-Bitar** turned their movement into the Arab Renaissance (Ba'th) Party.

During the party's first two decades, Aflaq held the position of secretary-general and remained its intellectual inspiration while staying out of the main political arena. He never ran for parliament and served only briefly as minister of **education** in 1949. In the **United Arab Republic (UAR)** era, when the Syrian branch of the party voluntarily dissolved itself, Aflaq spent most of

his time in Beirut guiding the party's National Command and holding aloof from UAR policies. The Syrian Ba`th reemerged after the breakup of the UAR, but Aflaq no longer enjoyed the authority of the party's senior statesman because a younger generation of party members, including the secret **Military Committee**, resented his earlier dissolution of the party and clove to more radical social ideas. These younger members would challenge Aflaq and Bitar's leadership after the party seized power in the wake of the **March 8, 1963 Coup**. For instance, the Syrian Regional Command was reconstituted in 1963, but Aflaq was not included, and, in May 1965, he resigned as secretary-general of the party's National Command. When his allies tried to restore the supremacy of the old guard, the Military Committee and its allies struck in the **February 23, 1966 Coup**, creating a permanent split in the party. The **Neo-Ba`th** rulers imprisoned many of their former comrades, but they allowed Aflaq to leave the country, never to return. His exile began in Beirut and continued in Brazil until the **Iraqi** branch of the Ba`th seized power in 1968. Its leaders invited him to Baghdad and named him secretary-general of the party. Aflaq spent most of the next seven years in Beirut and moved to Iraq when the **Lebanese Civil War** erupted in 1975. Baghdad's Ba`thist rulers treated him as an honored guest for the remainder of his life.

Aflaq's writings show traces of both Marxist and German romantic nationalist influences. According to Aflaq, Arab unity had to come about through a fundamental reform of the personality of Arabs that would occur if they could transcend their divisive loyalties (to **religion**, clan, or region). Arab freedom means both national independence and personal political freedoms of speech, assembly, and belief. As for socialism, it comprises an intrinsic element of Arab nationalism, but Arabs must adapt socialist ideas to their own particular circumstances. The party's 1947 **constitution** included articles calling for equitable distribution of wealth, state control over foreign **trade**, and limits on rural landholdings, yet it also recognized the legitimacy of private property.

AFRIN RIVER. A small but strategically situated tributary of the **Orontes River** in northwestern Syria. The Afrin flows into Syria from **Turkey's** Taurus Mountain range and then flows back into Turkey's Hatay (**Alexandretta**) province. It cuts a valley that historically served as an east-west artery between the coastal city of Antioch and the **Euphrates River**, and as a north-south route from southern Turkey to **Aleppo**. In the early **Islamic** centuries, the Afrin River Valley formed part of the military frontier with the **Byzantine Empire**, and during the **Crusades**, the Franks held it for several decades.

AGHA. A **Turkish** term that refers to a chief or master. In Syrian usage, it denoted the leader of a local **janissary** unit or other urban militia from the 17th to early 19th centuries. Aghas emerged when imperial janissaries blended with provincial urban populations during the 17th century. In Syrian towns, the aghas' command of military power gave them political influence and the means to control economic resources. In **Damascus**, for instance, the aghas came to dominate the grain **trade** that fed the city. Their local power became evident in the aftermath of an August 1831 uprising against an **Ottoman** initiative to impose a new tax. The city's aghas murdered the Ottoman governor and formed a local government. They then exploited their control over grain storehouses to create artificial shortages and drive up food prices. Long lines at bakeries led to bread riots. The aghas' extortionate reign came to an end in June 1832, when Egyptian troops commanded by **Ibrahim Pasha** occupied the city. During the **Tanzimat** era (1839–1876), the Ottomans gradually reduced the aghas' power and slowly assimilated them into the empire's new administrative structures. By the end of the century, they no longer constituted a distinct social category.

AGRICULTURE. Until recent decades, most Syrians throughout history worked in agriculture as small landowners, tenants, sharecroppers, and laborers, and the bulk of the country's wealth came from agricultural production. About 80 percent of Syrian agriculture depends on annually variable rainfall, thus production fluctuates from year to year. For example, a bumper grain crop of 2.8 million tons in 1988 was followed by a year of drought and a crop of only 1 million tons in 1989. There are two main zones of rain-fed agriculture. One is a narrow band that runs northward from the **Hawran** along the foothills of the Anti-Lebanon range to central Syria in the vicinities of **Homs**, **Hama**, and **Aleppo** and then spreads eastward into **Jazira**. This large region includes **Damascus** and its **Ghuta** oasis, the **Orontes River** Valley and a vast lowland of drained marshes called the **Ghab**, and Jazira in the northeast. The second zone, which runs between the borders of **Lebanon** and **Turkey**, is the thin coastal strip and the western slopes of mountains rising above the sea. This region produces cotton, tobacco, fruits, and olives. A small proportion of cultivated land has been irrigated by Syria's major rivers since ancient times, and since **World War II**, that proportion has increased, particularly along the **Euphrates River** and **Khabur River** and in the Ghab.

Wheat is the most widely grown crop, particularly in the region from Homs to Aleppo and in Jazira along the Euphrates and Khabur rivers. Barley is the next most widely cultivated cereal, usually grown in drier areas. The second major crop and one of Syria's chief exports is cotton, two-thirds of which is grown on irrigated lands along the Euphrates and Khabur rivers and on rain-fed lands between Aleppo and Hama. In 1965, cotton accounted for 43 percent of Syria's exports. Even though the value of cotton exports con-

tinued to grow in the 1970s, its significance in exports diminished, falling in 1972 to one-third of exports, largely because of the development of **petroleum**. Tobacco, grown in the mountains around **Latakia**, is another export crop. Olives are grown primarily in the hills near Aleppo and **Idlib**. Other crops include millet, lentils, and sugar beets, the latter of which are processed into sugar.

After World War II, the amount of land under cultivation increased from 1.75 million hectares in 1953, to 5.9 million in 1969, and to 6.2 million in 1980. Most of this expansion took place in the first decade of independence, when private landowners in Homs, Hama, and Aleppo invested in agricultural machinery to open the northeast. The investments of these “tractor capitalists” resulted in larger grain and cotton harvests.

Whereas the expansion of cultivation during the 1940s and 1950s occurred at the initiative of private landowners, the government assumed a more decisive role starting around 1960, with the **United Arab Republic’s (UAR)** legislation on **land reform** and labor relations. To implement these laws, the UAR created two ministries, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Agrarian Reform. The UAR also extended government authority over the **economy’s** most significant export and raw material for domestic manufacturers by establishing the Syrian Cotton Board. The **Ba’th Party** regime deepened the state’s role in 1965, by taking over large cotton-ginning concerns and creating a public agency to handle grain exports. Two years later, the regime created the General Federation of Agricultural Cooperatives, designed to manage the hundreds of privately operated cooperative farms on land that peasants had obtained as a result of land reform. Through these cooperatives, the government took over agricultural credit, marketing, and processing crops in a blend of public and private sectors. By 1970, the Syrian government had consolidated a hybrid of public and private enterprise in agriculture, where most cultivators worked private holdings and the state-dominated credit, marketing, and inputs.

Irrigation remained under close government supervision due to the higher productivity of irrigated lands, which constituted more than a quarter of the cultivated area. Nearly all cotton and other summer crops, as well as 60 to 70 percent of wheat and other winter crops, depended on irrigation. The government used a variety of large-scale projects on the Euphrates and Orontes rivers and smaller projects to extend irrigation. Small projects included a series of dams along the Snobar River in Latakia governorate and efforts to irrigate lands along the **Yarmuk River** by installing pumps and digging an extensive canal network.

In the early 21st century, irrigation consumed more than 85 percent of Syria’s scarce **water** resources. To better manage water use, the government adopted a variety of conservation strategies that were more efficient than the customary technique of “basin” irrigation, which inundated orchards and

fields cultivated for grains and vegetables. A small but increasing proportion of land was put under sprinkler irrigation to use water more sparingly. The government also attempted to promote drip irrigation and subsurface irrigation, which decreases evaporation. By making research into more efficient irrigation techniques a priority, the government increased water savings and crop yields.

Intensive agricultural techniques raised productivity but brought about **environmental** damage. In much of the country, inadequate drainage resulted in salinization of the soil, and in areas where highly saline soil was not remedied, the amount of cultivable land declined. Overuse of fertilizers caused soil pollution, while the removal of plant cover for cultivation led to wind erosion. Furthermore, large livestock herds and open access resulted in overgrazing. Given the natural limits on the total supply of surface water and the environmental hazards of intensive irrigation, agrarian experts looked to the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA), located in Aleppo, to identify new ways to increase productivity in rain-fed regions.

Even with increases in agricultural production, the sector's overall part in the Syrian economy fell from 35 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) in 1953–1959, to 26 percent in 1960–1973, to 20 percent in 1974–1980, before rising to about 25 percent in 2000. Agriculture's share then fell to 19 percent in 2008. This relative long-term decline was due to increases in the commercial, **mining**, and manufacturing sectors. In 1972, agricultural goods made up half of Syria's exports, but, after 1974, oil surpassed agriculture, which, in 1980, comprised just 13 percent of exports. Another measure of the relative decline in agriculture's role in the Syrian economy is the proportion of labor engaged in this sector. Before 1960, 60 percent of the labor force worked in agriculture; by 1979, that figure had fallen to 31 percent. In the early 1990s, agriculture engaged only 23 percent of the labor force. The share of agricultural labor ranged from 27 to 30 percent in the early 2000s, before sharply falling to 17 percent in 2004, probably due to the beginning of a severe drought that lasted for years.

To give new momentum to the agriculture sector, the government adopted new **trade** policies in the early 2000s. These policies reflected an export-oriented philosophy that eased constraints on exports and exempted them from taxes while lowering duties on the import of items necessary for agricultural production. Government policy set three objectives: 1) increase agriculture's contribution to GDP and economic stability, 2) increase self-sufficiency and decrease a trade imbalance in agricultural products, and 3) integrate agriculture with other sectors of the economy. To achieve those objectives, the government expanded the scope for private-sector activity in marketing, processing, exporting, and supplying inputs.

The **Syrian Uprising** disrupted the agricultural sector. The Ministry of Agriculture estimated that wheat production would fall 900,000 tons short and barley production 800,000 tons short in 2011, but independent analysts considered these estimations optimistic because the major zones of agricultural production were at the heart of the uprising. A shortfall in grain production would force Syria to rely more on imports, but international sanctions made it difficult for the government to purchase grain on international markets. In 2011, declining agricultural production, coupled with sanctions, led the World Food Programme to declare that the food security of many Syrians was "fragile." *See also* LABOR MOVEMENT.

AHMAD PASHA "AL-JAZZAR" (?–1804). Ottoman governor of southern Syria in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Ahmad Pasha's brutal methods of extracting revenues, extorting wealth, and keeping order gained him the nickname "*al-Jazzar*," or the butcher. Born in Bosnia, he began his rise to prominence in Istanbul by attracting the notice of an Ottoman official. He later entered the company of the **mamluks** in **Egypt**, but, in 1768, he fell out with his patron and went to Syria, where the Ottomans appointed him governor of the coastal province of Sidon in 1775. Various circumstances allowed Ahmad Pasha to become the dominant figure in southern Syria for nearly three decades. One was the increase in **trade** to Europe in **agricultural** products. His control over Syrian ports enabled him to skim a rich revenue in customs taxes, which he used to enlarge the military resources at his disposal. He also benefited from Istanbul's declining ability to exercise authority over the provinces.

In the face of challenges from the insubordinate mamluks in Egypt, **Wahhabi** raids from Arabia, wars with **Russia**, and **Napoleon Bonaparte's** invasion, the Ottomans experimented with different administrative solutions to the problem of keeping order in Syria. One option was to place the usually separate provinces of Sidon and **Damascus** under a single governor. Thus, Ahmad Pasha was governor of southern Syria from 1785 to 1786, 1790 to 1795, and 1801 to 1804. He established himself at the port of Acre and built up its fortifications to make it a formidable stronghold. In the 1790s, he maneuvered to extend his authority over **Lebanon**, but his endeavors were interrupted by Napoleon's 1799 invasion. Following his successful defense of Acre against a **French** siege, the Ottomans again appointed him governor of Damascus in 1801, a position he held until his death in 1804.

AIRLINES. The country's only carrier is Syrian Arab Airlines, established months after independence in 1946. In its first years, the airline served only domestic flights. It began flying to Arab countries in the 1950s, and added European destinations in the 1960s. The two main international airports are

at **Damascus** and **Aleppo**, while the airport in **Latakia** is a lesser hub. International sanctions against the Syrian government curtailed the airlines' flights to North America and Europe. Its domestic flights connect the major hubs, with interior airports at **Dayr al-Zur** and **al-Qamishli**.

AJNADAYN, BATTLE OF. The first major battle between Arab Muslim and **Byzantine** forces. Although the Arab chroniclers give different dates, most historians assign the battle to July 634, at a site 35 kilometers southwest of Jerusalem. Byzantine forces included the brother of the emperor and other dignitaries, but the Arabs decisively defeated them. The Arab victory opened the way for their conquest of **Palestine** and Syria.

ALAWI. Syria's largest heterodox Muslim sect. The Alawis currently account for roughly 12 percent of the population. About 75 percent of the Alawis live in **Latakia** province, where they comprise 60 percent of the population. There are also Alawi communities in the Akkar region of northern **Lebanon** and southeastern **Turkey**. In Syria, they are divided into four tribal confederations: the Kalbiyya, the Khayatin, the Haddadin, and the Matawira. Members of this sect call themselves followers of Ali, but **Sunnis** and **Shi'is**, who consider them heretics, call them Nusayris, followers of Muhammad ibn Nusayr, a 9th-century Shi'i propagandist.

Muhammad ibn Nusayr (d. 883), a Persian who spent most of his life in **Iraq**, claimed to be the "door," or means of access, to the 11th Shi'i **imam**, who, Twelver Shi'is believe, had gone into occultation in 873. Later followers brought the sect to northern Syria in the 10th century. Al-Husayn ibn Hamdan al-Khasibi (d. 957) was the key figure in spreading the sect in Syria after he settled in **Hamdanid Aleppo**. In 1031, a later Alawi leader moved from Aleppo to Latakia, whence the sect spread into the mountains behind the city that has since become known as Jabal Nusayri or **Jabal Ansariyya**.

Alawi texts reveal a heterodox version of Shi'ism that is distinguished by belief in a trinity of Ali as the divine incarnation, Muhammad as the Prophet, and Salman al-Farsi as the propagator of **religion**. Alawi interpretation of the Qur'an posits an esoteric meaning of certain verses, which, in their reading, establish the special status of Ali and his descendants. They also believe in cycles of revelation that began with Adam; continued with Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus; and ended with Muhammad. According to the Alawis, each cycle represented an advance over the previous one to correspond with advances in human society. They explain their differences from other Muslims by claiming that they possess secret knowledge of religion that others are not fit to receive. Like the **Druzes**, the Alawis recognize a spiritual hierarchy that possesses and transmits esoteric knowledge, while ordinary

believers are familiar with simpler aspects of the religion. Unlike Muslims, the Alawis do not observe prayer in mosques, fast during Ramadan, or perform the pilgrimage to Mecca.

For centuries, the Alawis fended off attempts by Sunni rulers to impose their authority. In the early 20th century, they rallied to **Shaykh Salih al-Ali's** revolt against **French** rule. After **France** suppressed his movement in 1921, the **French Mandate** authorities created a separate Territory of the Alawis, thereby perpetuating their traditional political separation from the rest of Syria. Under this regime, the French created religious law courts that were supposed to apply Twelver Shi'i jurisprudence on the grounds that Alawis were part of that branch of Shi'ism. In 1936, France dissolved the separate administration for the Alawis and united their region, as the province of Latakia, with the rest of Syria under the terms of the **Franco-Syrian Treaty**. When the **National Bloc** government appointed a Sunni Muslim as governor of the province, there were protests by Alawis, and a revolt erupted under the leadership of **Sulayman al-Murshid**. In July 1939, the National Bloc government resigned, and France reestablished an autonomous regime for the Alawis, but the region was permanently reunited with the rest of Syria in February 1942. In independent Syria, the Alawis obtained formal recognition in the **legal system** for their Twelver Shi'i courts in 1952.

Since the early 1960s, Alawi members of the **armed forces** and the **Ba'th Party** have played a dominant role in Syrian politics. In 1971, **Hafiz al-Asad** became the first Alawi head of state. He attempted to gain recognition as a full-fledged Muslim, but conservative Sunni opponents continue to regard him and his coreligionists as heretics determined to destroy **Islam**. The Alawi composition of Asad's entourage offered him a reliable circle of advisers at the same time it proved a liability in gaining the trust and support of Sunni Muslims. Observers disagreed as to whether Asad had turned Syria into an Alawi regime or merely depended on close relatives and associates to handle the most sensitive matters and distributed power more broadly to members of other religious communities.

The situation did not change under Asad's son, **Bashar al-Asad**. The Alawis held a disproportionate amount of power by dominating higher-level positions in Syria's political, military, and intelligence sectors. Since the **Syrian Uprising** erupted in the spring of 2011, tensions between Alawis and other Syrians have risen. Despite efforts by opposition groups to attract the Alawis to their side, most of them supported the Asad government, and the heavy presence of Alawis throughout the armed forces and security services has made those regime forces resilient to defections. *See also* MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD.

ALEPPO. *Halab* in Arabic. This northern city is located on the banks of the **Quwayq River**, a minor stream that flows from the Taurus Mountains of nearby **Turkey**. It lies in a semiarid region that receives enough rainfall to grow wheat, cotton, olives, vines, and its famous pistachios. Aleppo's proximity to the northern reaches of the Syrian Desert has made it a market town for the **Bedouins** for centuries.

Aleppo is one of the world's most ancient cities, being mentioned in 20th-century BC **Egyptian** texts. It is famous for its citadel, which dominates the area from a rocky height and has provided a defensive stronghold for townsfolk and garrisons many times throughout the centuries. In the 2nd millennium BC, Aleppo came under Mitanni and then Hittite rule. An Aramaean city-state flourished in the early 1st millennium, but it was conquered by **Assyrian** invaders in the 9th century, and the city did not regain prominence until the Seleucid era.

The Arabs conquered Aleppo in 636, but its Muslim population grew more slowly than in other Syrian towns. For a time, Aleppo was the capital of a northern Syrian dynasty, the **Hamdanids**, in the 10th century, but it then entered an era of strife and violence because of warfare between the **Byzantines** and Muslim dynasties and among local factions. The city did not recover until the middle of the 12th century, under the **Atabegs**. Sultan **Nur al-Din Mahmud** established the city's first six **madrasas**, as well as **Sufi** convents and a hospital. The city enjoyed a period of great prosperity and expansion during **Ayyubid** rule in the 13th century, when the citadel was completely rebuilt and repaired and various markets were renovated. This era abruptly ended with a **Mongol** attack at the beginning of 1260. During the next several years, Aleppo passed between the hands of the **Mamluks** and Mongols, and during their wars the citadel was again destroyed.

Aleppo received a new boost under **Ottoman** rule when it became the center of its own province and a nexus for **trade** between the Orient and Europe. During the 16th and 17th centuries, Venetian, **French**, British, and Dutch consulates and trading stations were established. Aleppo's role as a transit center for international trade declined in the last quarter of the 18th century. In the **Tanzimat** era, the city was the scene of a major uprising against local Christians in 1850. When France and **Great Britain** drew the boundaries of modern Syria at the end of **World War I**, they severed Aleppo from its natural hinterland of southern Turkey and northern **Iraq**; the city received a further blow with the 1939 cession of **Alexandretta** to Turkey, thereby losing its traditional Mediterranean port. Since independence, Aleppo has developed into a major **industrial** center, especially its private-sector firms in textiles, food processing, pharmaceuticals, and glass. The city population has grown from 300,000 in 1945 to approximately 3 million in 2012. It has a large **Christian minority**, including many **Armenians**. *See also* ALEPPO MASSACRE OF 1850.

ALEPPO, BOMBING OF. On 10 February 2012, two bombs intended for military intelligence and police compounds in **Aleppo** killed 28 people and wounded 235, according to the Syrian Ministry of Health. These explosions came amidst broader violence throughout the country stemming from the Syrian Uprising, which began in the spring of 2011, and this bombing is widely considered to be the first major act of violence in Aleppo since the uprising began. No group claimed responsibility for the act. Government sources accused what it called “armed **terrorist** gangs,” while opposition groups accused the Asad regime of setting off the bombs to justify its crackdown on protesters. The **Free Syrian Army** was in the area at the time, and it claimed that while it was attacking the compounds, it was not responsible for the bombing. A month prior to the attack, **Ammar Qurabi**, head of the National Organization for Human Rights in Syria, claimed that Syrian security officials told him that the Asad regime was planning massive explosions in Aleppo.

ALEPPO MASSACRE OF 1850. On 17–18 October 1850, Muslim crowds attacked a **Christian** suburb of **Aleppo** in the city’s only instance of communal riots during the **Ottoman** era. The Ottoman authorities had recently completed the first census of Aleppo’s adult males, and there was widespread apprehension that conscription would follow. A crowd of Muslims gathered before the governor’s building to protest, but the governor refused to deal with them, and they proceeded to Judayda, the prosperous quarter of **Uniate** Christian merchants. There the mob entered homes and churches, plundered and looted, and murdered between 10 and 70 Christians. As word of the atrocities spread, Christians living in other quarters took refuge in the homes of Muslim neighbors and in the commercial district. On 19 October, the leader of the local **janissary** faction headed off further violence by promising to present the Ottoman governor with the crowd’s demands, including a promise not to carry out conscription and to prohibit public processions by Christians. A brief calm was broken by a second round of violence in the first days of November, when fighting erupted between janissary and **ashraf** factions. By that time, Ottoman reinforcements had arrived, and they forcibly repressed the quarreling factions. The authorities arrested approximately 600 men for their part in the riots and punished them by drafting some and exiling the others. They also demanded the restoration of stolen property, but little of it was recovered. In the months after the massacre, several hundred Christians emigrated from the city to settle in Beirut and Izmir.

Historians explain the unusual communal outbreak as a consequence of Ottoman reform and **Tanzimat** policies, including the 1826 abolition of the janissaries that damaged the economic and social standing of Aleppo’s deeply entrenched janissary faction, as well as the imposition of a capital tax on Muslims, who perceived the measure as signaling a threat to their customary

superiority to Christians, who always paid such a tax. Economic tendencies may also have played a role. The city's Uniate Christians prospered from the growing trade with Europe in the 1840s, and their good fortune may have incited the envy of the city's Muslims.

ALEXANDRETTA. *Iskandarun* in Arabic; *Hatay* in **Turkish**. All three terms refer to both the city and the province, or *sanjak*, currently located in southeastern Turkey. The port city of Alexandretta historically served as **Aleppo**'s outlet to the Mediterranean. By the early 20th century, the Sanjak's population consisted of Turks, **Sunni** Arabs, **Alawis**, **Christian** Arabs, and **Armenians**. After the destruction of the **Ottoman Empire**, both the Turkish Republic and Syria, under the **French Mandate**, claimed the territory. As part of the **Franklin-Bouillon Agreement** of 1921, **France** pledged to safeguard the status of the Sanjak's Turks. By the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne, Turkey recognized the international boundary that assigned Alexandretta to Syria. In the various administrative arrangements of the early French Mandate, the Sanjak was part of the Syrian state and did not have a special autonomous status like that in **Jabal Druze** or **Jabal Ansariyya**.

Controversy over Alexandretta's status erupted following the negotiation of the **Franco-Syrian Treaty of 1936**, which alarmed the Turkish government because it appeared to portend the permanent absorption of the Sanjak into an independent Arab country and made no provision for continuing its special status. Popular sentiment in Turkey favored its annexation, a view the government eventually adopted. The League of Nations approved a new independent regime for Alexandretta in November 1937. Several months later, France's alarm at Italy's expansionist ambitions led to the conclusion of the July 1938 Franco-Turkish Friendship Treaty, by which France agreed to the introduction of Turkish troops into the Sanjak. There followed the opening of a local parliament with a Turkish majority, which France had promised Turkey. During the next several months, the parliament gradually merged the province with Turkey through economic and judicial legislation. In June 1939, France completely withdrew from the province, paving the way for Turkey to annex it. Syrian nationalists vehemently condemned France's surrender of the territory, and the episode became a lasting point of friction between Turkey and Syria.

Since Syria gained its independence seven years after Turkey's annexation of the region, **Damascus** governments have never made a serious bid to recapture it, but they have not been reconciled to Turkish sovereignty either. It still rankles many Syrians, especially **refugees** from the territory and their descendants. Moreover, the loss of Alexandretta has played a role in the politics of independent Syria in two specific respects. First, a faction of the

Ba`th Party inspired by **Zaki al-Arsuzi**, himself a refugee, represented irredentism about the region. Second, the Syrian government supported the separatist Kurdistan Workers' Party's anti-Turkish activities there in the 1990s.

ALI IBN ABI TALIB (c. 600–661). The cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet Muhammad, Ali emerged in the years after Muhammad's death as a leader in Muslim affairs. His later followers claimed that he was the rightful successor to Muhammad's supreme leadership, but that others usurped his legitimate claim to the **caliphate**. After the murder of the third caliph, Uthman, in 656, Ali became the fourth caliph, but the slain caliph's kinsmen, the **Umayyads**, demanded that Ali bring Uthman's assassins to justice before they would recognize his authority. Ali ultimately led an army against the Umayyads at the 657 Battle of Siffin, but the engagement reached an inconclusive end when the parties agreed to arbitration. A number of Ali's followers seceded from his movement and became his enemies because they condemned his willingness to compromise. This group became known as the **Kharijis**, and one of them assassinated Ali in 661. Nonetheless, a large section of Muslims remained loyal to Ali and claimed that legitimate religious and political authority continued to reside in his descendants, the **imams**, or rightful leaders of Muslims. This following became known as *shi`at Ali*, or the party of Ali, hence the term **Shi`i** for those Muslims who uphold Alid legitimism. *See also* ALAWI; DRUZES; ISMA`ILI; NIZARI; QAR-MATI.

ALI, SHAYKH SALIH AL- (1884–1926). An **Alawi** landowner in the **Jabal Ansariyya**, Shaykh Salih led Alawi resistance to the establishment of the **French Mandate** to preserve his community's customary autonomy. In 1919, he forced a **French** garrison to abandon its post in the Jabal Ansariyya. With support from regional notables, **Amir Faysal**'s government, and **Turkish** nationalists fighting the French in southeastern Turkey, the revolt held off the French for two years. Once the French defeated Faysal's forces in July 1920 and occupied **Damascus**, they concentrated their resources on subduing revolts in various parts of the country, including Shaykh Salih's. The Alawi leader then gained the support of a revolt that erupted west of **Aleppo** under the leadership of **Ibrahim Hananu**, but, in October 1921, the French ended Turkish support for Shaykh Salih by reaching the **Franklin-Bouillon Agreement**. With the arrival of French reinforcements in the Jabal Ansariyya and outside help no longer available, the revolt fizzled, and its leader went into hiding until he was pardoned. He spent the remainder of his life in his home village in the Jabal Ansariyya.

ARAB GAS PIPELINE. Several countries participated in a multilateral effort to build a pipeline to transport **Egyptian** natural gas to **Jordan**, Syria, and **Lebanon**, eventually extending to **Iraq** and **Turkey** as well. Construction on the pipeline began in 2008 and was projected to extend for 1200 kilometers through segments, from al-Arish, Egypt, to Aqaba, Jordan, from Aqaba to al-Rihab, Jordan, from al-Rihab to Homs, Syria, and from Homs to Tripoli, Lebanon, with future lines to Iraq and Turkey. In 2008, the Arab Gas Pipeline saved Syria from importing 2,500 tons of fuel per day. During the **Syrian Uprising**, several explosions along the Egyptian section of the pipeline resulted in halting the flow of natural gas to Jordan.

ARAB LEAGUE. *See* LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES (ARAB LEAGUE).

ARAB NATIONALISM. The idea that Arabs comprise a political community distinct from other peoples arose in modern times. It first appeared in **Ottoman** Syria during the early 20th century among a handful of intellectuals and a faction of the urban political elites of **Damascus** and Beirut. The contribution of intellectuals, both secular and religious, was to emphasize the unique role of Arabs and the Arabic **language** in the history of **Islamic** civilization. They argued that this role indicated a special status for Arabs in the world, although they did not initially draw the conclusion that the Arabs should secede from the Ottoman Empire. As for the protonationalist politicians, whom historians refer to as Arabists, their identification of particular Arab grievances in the empire had as much to do with inraelite competition for office as ideological conviction. Before **World War I**, the Arabists sought a greater degree of autonomy for Arab provinces and the exclusive use of Arabic in law courts, government offices, and schools. Prewar Arab nationalist societies included **al-Fatat** and al-Ahd. The latter group was established in 1913, among Arab military officers, mostly Syrian and **Iraqi**. Their program was to obtain political autonomy for the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire.

During World War I, Arab nationalist activity increased because of the uncertainties surrounding the war's outcome and the prospect that a European power, namely **Great Britain**, might provide material support for the establishment of an independent Arab kingdom. At a 1915 meeting with **Amir Faysal** in Damascus, Arab nationalists formulated the Damascus Protocol, stating their goals to be British recognition of Arab independence and the end of commercial and fiscal privileges for foreigners and their local protégés. Nonetheless, during the war, most Syrians remained loyal to the empire. The Ottoman defeat and occupation of Syria by the forces of Great Britain, **France**, and Amir Faysal transformed the political landscape, and

Arab nationalism gained greater popularity. When France occupied Syria two years later, Arab nationalism became a rallying point for resistance to European rule.

During the **French Mandate**, a number of Arab nationalist parties and groups formed, including the **League of National Action** and the **Ba`th Party**. In the 1950s, the scope of Arab nationalism broadened beyond the original focus on the Ottoman Arab lands of historical Syria and Iraq to include all Arabic-speaking countries from the Atlantic Ocean to the Persian Gulf. The movement attained its greatest moment in 1958, when Syria merged with **Egypt** to form the **United Arab Republic**, but the failure of this union dealt Arab nationalism a severe blow. Later developments in Syria and the region that further weakened the ideology included the 1966 split within the Ba`th Party and the defeat of Arab nationalist regimes in the **June 1967 War**. Since 1970, the consolidation of durable Arab regimes pursuing disparate policies has further enervated the early vigor of Arab nationalism, although the sentiment can still be tapped, as was demonstrated in popular Arab reaction against the American-led military assault on Iraq's occupation of Kuwait in 1991. Syria still officially adheres to an Arab nationalist ideology, but, in the 1990s, it appeared to be spent as a dynamic force in history. *See also* ARAB REVOLT; HUSAYN-MCMAHON CORRESPONDENCE.

ARAB REVOLT. In June 1916, forces loyal to the sharif of Mecca, **Husayn ibn Ali**, launched a revolt against **Ottoman** rule in western Arabia and seized Mecca. **Great Britain** had been at war with the Ottoman Empire since November 1914, and British military planners were concerned about the effect of **Pan-Islamic** propaganda on the loyalty of the British Empire's Muslim subjects in **Egypt** and India. A political-military alliance with the Meccan sharif could only strengthen Britain's war effort. After the exchange of correspondence between Husayn and Sir Henry McMahon, the British high commissioner in Egypt, the sharif plotted his anti-Ottoman revolt.

Funded and supplied by British agents, the revolt immediately succeeded in seizing control of Mecca, but it encountered determined Ottoman resistance at Medina, so Arab forces bypassed that city and marched toward Syria. Husayn's son **Faysal ibn Husayn al-Hashimi** played a significant part in leading Arab forces to the capture of Ottoman positions in northern Arabia and southern Syria. In the fall of 1918, Arab forces advanced toward **Damascus** via **Dar'a** while British troops pushed the Ottomans out of **Palestine**. The campaign culminated when Arab forces occupied Damascus on 1 October 1918. *See also* HUSAYN-MCMAHON CORRESPONDENCE.

ARAB SOCIALIST PARTY. Created by **Akram al-Hawrani** in January 1950, to promote the confiscation of feudal estates and distribution of land to poor peasants. The party also advocated a neutral **foreign policy**, secularism, universal **education**, and the emancipation of **women** from traditional constraints. The base of this party lay in **Hama** and surrounding towns among peasants, workers, and shopkeepers. Hawrani's backers seized lands and fought off landlords' attempts to regain them. The party received the backing of **Adib al-Shishakli** when he first came to power in 1949, thus further encouraging the burgeoning peasant movement to take over the land they worked, but he dissolved the party in 1952. Later that year or in early 1953, Hawrani merged the Arab Socialists with the **Ba'th Party**, thus creating the Arab Socialist Renaissance Party and ending the independent existence of the Arab Socialist Party.

ARAB SPRING. A historic wave of revolutionary popular movements in the Arab world began in Tunisia in December 2010, and rapidly spread to **Egypt**, Libya, Yemen, Bahrain, and Syria. By early 2012, men who had ruled Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Yemen for decades fled, resigned, or died at the hands of rebels. The popular movement in Bahrain was harshly suppressed, with firm backing from **Saudi Arabia**. The example of unarmed demonstrators challenging authoritarian regimes dependent on brutal **security forces** inspired Syrians to do the same beginning in March 2011. The refusal of **Bashar al-Asad's** regime to grant the demands of protesters and the regime's decision to use violence to silence protesters fostered a dynamic that led to the **Syrian Uprising**, which evolved into a sectarian civil war that, by mid-2013, had no end in sight.

ARAB SUMMIT OF 2008. On 29 March 2008, President **Bashar al-Asad** hosted the 30th Arab League Summit in **Damascus**. Several Arab heads of state succumbed to pressure from the **United States** and sent lower-level officials to protest Syria's meddling in **Lebanon** and close ties with **Iran**. Only 12 Arab League members showed up for the summit, demonstrating Syria's isolation. The summit leaders could not agree on a common response to regional crises involving Lebanon, Syria, and **Israel**. The meeting resulted in no major changes since representatives refused to compromise and key leaders were absent from discussions.

ARCHAEOLOGY. European interest in studying the artifacts of the Middle East's ancient civilizations is commonly said to have begun with **Napoleon Bonaparte's** 1798 invasion of **Egypt**. While that event may have marked an intense phase of field investigation, it was not truly the beginning. In the case of Syria, European travelers had previously reported on the splendid ruins at

Palmyra, and the first published study of its inscriptions came out in 1753. Organized archaeological exploration came in the wake of **France's** military intervention after the 1860 communal conflict in **Lebanon**. A team of French scholars led by Ernest Renan scoured the Levantine coast for Phoenician artifacts and conducted the first surveys of ancient sites at Arwad, **Tartus**, and Amrit. During the next several decades, European and American attention focused on the Holy Land in an effort to uncover the material remains of sites associated with biblical events. Consequently, Syria was neglected until the **French Mandate** authorities created a special Antiquities Service to organize digs at Ra's Shamra (Ugarit) and Mari and restore some of the country's more striking late classical (Palmyra) and medieval (Crac des Chevaliers/**Hisn al-Akrad**) sites. The independent government of Syria created a Directorate of Antiquities and Museums to oversee all aspects of archaeological activity, from approving a growing program of European and American excavation to exhibits at the major museums in **Aleppo** and **Damascus**.

Perhaps the country's two most famous ancient sites are Ebla (Tell Mardikh) and Ugarit. An Italian dig at Ebla, located 50 kilometers south of Aleppo, uncovered a huge store of clay tablets inscribed in cuneiform and dating from around 2300 BC. The Ebla archives have shed new light on the early history of Semitic **languages**. A French team working at Ugarit, located near **Latakia**, unearthed an ancient Mediterranean port containing temples, palaces, and residential areas. Texts and artifacts from Ugarit provide insight into early Hebrew culture. Archaeologists also continue to work on remains from the Hellenistic, Roman, and **Byzantine** eras at several sites that attract many Western tourists. Apamea (north of **Hama**) is renowned for its two-kilometer-long thoroughfare along which the facades and columns of buildings still stand. Along the **Euphrates River**, Dura Europos (southeast of **Dayr al-Zur**) is famous for its **Christian** and **Jewish architecture** and **art**, especially an intact 3rd-century synagogue painted with frescoes. One of the best-preserved Roman theaters in the world is at Bosra (south of Damascus). A remarkable Byzantine-era site is St. Simeon (northwest of Aleppo), one of the most important Christian sites in the eastern Mediterranean. Its fame rests on a cruciform church built to commemorate St. Simeon the Stylite (d. 459), renowned for spending the last 34 years of his life atop a pillar near a monastery. There are dozens of lesser sites from different eras scattered throughout the country. In the 1990s, more than 400 foreign archaeological projects were in progress, in addition to Syrian digs led by the Directorate of Antiquities.

The **Syrian Uprising** has placed archaeological sites in peril. Some sites have been damaged in clashes between government and rebel forces, while others have been appropriated by the military to use as bases. In some in-

stances, shelling by regime forces has damaged historic buildings, and the deteriorating security situation has allowed looters to steal artifacts from museums and archaeological sites.

ARCHITECTURE. When the Arabs conquered Syria, they encountered an architectural tradition that blended Hellenistic, Roman, and **Byzantine** styles. Early Muslim architecture in the **Umayyad** period took a religious form as mosques and a secular form as **desert palaces**. The caliph al-Walid (r. 705–715) ordered the construction of royal mosques at Medina, Jerusalem, and **Damascus**. Certain features of the royal mosque at Damascus—the concave prayer niche (*mihrab*), the elevated pulpit (*minbar*), and the axial nave crossing the prayer aisles—became typical for other mosques. The desert palaces were built on the sites of agricultural estates and combine Roman, Byzantine, and Sassanid Persian forms.

Urban construction flourished in the late **Saljuk**, **Zangid**, and **Ayyubid** eras (roughly 1070 to 1260), especially at Damascus and **Aleppo**. Rulers and wealthy patrons created endowments (sing. **waqf**) to erect and maintain **madrasas**, **Sufi** hospices, institutes for instruction in Prophetic tradition (*dar al-hadith*), and hospitals (**bimaristans**). During the **Crusades**, the need for effective defense spurred rulers to put up new walls to fortify the cities and build bulky, but functional, strongholds, for instance, Aleppo’s 13th-century citadel that towers over the town and is a distinctive landmark to this day. **Mamluk** governors of Damascus and Aleppo put their mark on the urban landscape with massive tomb complexes that followed the example of sultans in Cairo. The Mamluk era also saw the construction of such ordinary public buildings as baths, caravanserais, Sufi hospices, and mosques. The trademark feature of Mamluk buildings was the “*ablaq*” pattern of alternating layers of light (white or pale yellow) and dark (black or grey) stone. That same distinctive appearance is evident in one of the finest specimens of **Ottoman** architecture in Damascus, the Sulaymaniyya Complex, designed by master architect Sinan and completed in the 1550s. Its purpose was to demonstrate Ottoman support for the annual pilgrimage caravan with a mosque, caravanserai, lodging, eating area, and shops. Since the Ottoman era, architectural design in Syria has not assumed a distinctive form.

ARGENTINA. Historical ties between Syria and Argentina date to Spanish colonization of the Americas. About 10 percent of Argentina’s population is of Syrian descent, and expatriates play a vital role in the country’s **economy**. The Arab–Argentine Chamber of Commerce, established in the 1930s, promotes bilateral trade. In 2009, Argentinian exports to Syria surpassed \$150 million. During President **Bashar al-Asad’s** 2010 Latin American tour, government officials from both countries expressed a desire to play a more

active role in regional affairs. The president also visited with expatriates and Argentinian National Congress members to discuss his commitment to Arab peace and South American investment in Syria. *See also* FOREIGN POLICY.

ARMED FORCES. When Syria became independent, its armed forces consisted of the **Troupes Spéciales du Levant**, created under the **French Mandate**. At first, **Sunni** Arabs were underrepresented in the Syrian Army, while **Alawis** and **Christians**, along with **Kurds** and **Circassians**, had numbers greater than their share in the overall population. Within a few years, that imbalance shifted with the admittance of more Sunni Arabs to the **Homs** Military Academy. Under **Adib al-Shishakli**, universal conscription for two-year service was instituted. While the Syrian Army grew during the next 10 years, political strife within the officer corps and seemingly perpetual purges, especially between 1955 and 1966, undermined any attempt at instilling professionalism in the armed forces. During the same period, however, the armed forces acquired substantial amounts of weaponry from the Soviet Union. On the eve of the **June 1967 War**, the army had about 50,000 troops, 500 tanks, and 100 Soviet warplanes. Minister of Defense **Hafiz al-Asad** then embarked on an ambitious strengthening of the armed forces. At the time of the **October 1973 War**, Syria had more than 130,000 men under arms with better professional training and command than a few years earlier. Although **Israeli** forces withstood Syria's assault and drove its forces back, the Syrians proved themselves far more formidable foes than they had been just six years before.

When **Egypt** embarked on its path toward a separate peace with Israel in 1978, it meant that Israel could concentrate its military resources against Syria. President Hafiz al-Asad then embarked on a massive buildup of the armed forces and extended military service to 30 months. In the 1970s and 1980s, Syria spent about 30 percent of its gross domestic product on the armed forces, a total of \$51 billion from 1977 to 1988. From the late 1970s to 1985, Syria doubled the size of its army to about 400,000 men. During the same period, its stock of tanks nearly doubled, from 2,300 to 4,050. Syria paid for this with \$22 billion in military aid from oil-rich Arab countries and \$20 billion in civilian aid between 1977 and 1988. This immense amount of Arab aid followed the 1978 Baghdad Summit, which was held to formulate a policy in response to Egypt's peace treaty with Israel. The Arab countries pledged \$1.8 billion per year to Syria for 10 years. Between 1978 and 1981, actual aid came close to that target but then began to diminish because of Syria's support for **Iran** against **Iraq** in the first Gulf War and falling oil revenues. The decline in actual aid and high military spending contributed to a foreign exchange crisis at the end of 1985. From 1986 to 1988, Syria received only \$500 million per year, mostly from **Saudi Arabia**.

Syria's support for Kuwait in the second Gulf War reopened the channels of financial aid, again making it possible to pay for large arms deals. A portion of the nearly \$2 billion that came from Saudi Arabia was spent from 1991 to 1992 on arms deals with Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, and **Russia**. The Syrians bolstered their ground forces with new tanks and antitank weapons; however, budget constraints forced the regime to reduce the size of the armed forces to 300,000 and prompted the adoption of a different approach that focuses on deterrence rather than parity. As a deterrent against Israeli air power, the Syrians obtained surface-to-surface missiles from North Korea and developed chemical warheads. The **nonconventional weapons** program reportedly included work on biological agents as well. When foreign observers criticized Syria's work in those fields, the government pointed out that Israel was already a nuclear power, so **Damascus** needed a deterrent force. Moreover, Israel's military cooperation with the **United States** enabled it to increase its technological advantage during the 1990s, while Syria lost its superpower patron when the Soviet Union collapsed. Any regime in Damascus will strive to augment its military power as long as it does not reach a peace agreement with Israel.

In addition to national defense, the Syrian Armed Forces had political and economic roles to reinforce the **Ba'th Party** regime. Recruits were routinely subjected to ideological **education**, and the Ministry of Defense had special **radio and television** broadcasts to publicize its achievements in supporting national goals. The armed forces also controlled sizable economic enterprises, the most important of which was the Military Housing Establishment, which employed as many as 45,000 men. This business enterprise not only erected military structures and housing for officers, it also constructed such public works as bridges, hospitals, and schools. A substantial portion of construction workers in the **public sector** worked for various military enterprises. The political and economic roles assumed by the armed forces stemmed from the regime's reliance on them for maintaining internal stability. The economic enterprises, in particular, provided abundant opportunities for top-ranking career officers to accumulate tremendous wealth.

In 2010, Syria had one of the largest militaries in the region, consisting of roughly 400,000 troops when fully mobilized. The armed forces are divided into four branches: the Syrian Arab Army, the Syrian Arab Navy, the Syrian Arab Air Force, and the Syrian Arab Air Defense Force. Damascus sustains its conventional forces through close ties with military suppliers like Russia, Iran, and North Korea. The nation's intelligence forces are similarly organized into four security directorates including Military Intelligence, Air Force Intelligence, State Security, and Political Security.

The armed forces played a central role in the campaign by **Bashar al-Asad's** regime to suppress the **Syrian Uprising**. The resort to violence against unarmed protesters, starting in March 2011, sparked dissension

throughout the armed forces and triggered waves of defections. Defections occurred at all levels of the armed forces, with low-level foot soldiers defecting alongside high-ranking brigadier generals. The majority of defections have been at the lower-levels, however, which are predominantly manned by members of the **Sunni** majority. Many soldiers and officers joined the **Free Syrian Army**, while others went to **refugee** camps in **Turkey**. Some defectors refrained from joining opposition forces. Hard figures on the number of defections are elusive, with estimates ranging from a few thousand to tens of thousands.

ARMÉE DU LEVANT. The **French** military force stationed in Syria and **Lebanon** during the **French Mandate** era. Some 1,000 French officers commanded troops recruited from colonies in Africa, including Senegal, Madagascar, and Morocco. The Armée du Levant initially had 70,000 men, but budget constraints forced its reduction to 15,000 in 1924. It remained at that size for most of the mandate period, except for increases during the **Great Revolt** and **World War II**.

ARMENIANS. A non-Arab **Christian minority** whose ancestral homeland is in present-day **Turkey** and the Caucasus. There have been small numbers of Armenians in Syria since ancient times, and, in the early **Islamic** period, educated Armenians served the **Umayyad** caliphs as secretaries and administrators. In the **Mamluk** era, a thriving Armenian community grew in **Aleppo**, which remains their main center in Syria today. Large numbers of Armenians fled wartime atrocities in **Ottoman** Turkey during **World War I**, and a second wave followed in the early 1920s, when **France** withdrew from southeastern Turkey (Cilicia). By 1925, approximately 50,000 **refugees** had settled in Aleppo, while others had migrated to towns in **Jazira**, including **Dayr al-Zur**, **al-Hasaka**, and **al-Qamishli**. During the **French Mandate** era, Armenians encountered animosity from Syrian Arabs because of the willingness of some Armenians to enlist in the **Troupes Spéciales du Levant**, which were used to suppress nationalist demonstrations. More recently, the **United Arab Republic** and **Ba'th Party** regimes banned Armenian-language newspapers and cultural associations, although **Hafiz al-Asad's** regime adopted a more tolerant attitude toward Armenian self-expression. Today, the Armenians comprise about 4 percent of Syria's population and mostly belong to the Armenian Orthodox Church (also called the Gregorian church), although a small number, perhaps 15 percent, adhere to the **Uniate** Armenian Catholic Church. Most Armenians have not joined the rebellion during the **Syrian Uprising** due to the Ba'th Party regime's favorable poli-

cies toward religious minorities. Nevertheless, the ranks of soldiers defecting to the opposition **Free Syrian Army** do include some Armenians, and the opposition's secular nationalist wing attracted members of the community.

ARMISTICE OF 1949. At the end of the **Palestine War of 1948**, **Egypt**, **Lebanon**, and **Jordan** negotiated armistice agreements with **Israel** under **United Nations (UN)** supervision at Rhodes. Syria, however, did not attend those negotiations, but it did agree in March 1949 to hold talks with Israel. The talks were conducted under the newly installed regime of **Husni al-Za'im**, who had seized power on 30 March. Representatives met near the Syrian–Israeli cease-fire lines on 5 April. Israel wanted the Syrians to evacuate land they had occupied in the fighting because this land lay inside the borders of **Palestine** agreed upon by **Great Britain** and **France** in the early 1920s. Behind the scenes, Za'im made some surprising offers to the Israelis. He told them that Syria would permanently absorb 300,000 **Palestinian refugees** and settle them in the northeastern region of **Jazira**, far from the border with Israel. In return, he sought border adjustments and financial support to integrate the refugees. He also offered to begin direct negotiations at the highest level of representation to conclude a peace treaty, not just an armistice. Israel's leaders, however, insisted on a Syrian withdrawal before any further steps were taken, so the talks stalled. In the end, Syria and Israel signed an agreement on 20 July 1949. Its terms provided for the creation of **demilitarized zones** in areas occupied by Syrian forces during the war and for the formation of a Mixed Armistice Commission with two representatives from each country and a UN chairman. The two parties maintained their claims to sovereignty over the zones, so the armistice agreement deferred a final settlement to later negotiations. Such talks never took place, and Israel eventually asserted its control over those lands by force.

ARSLAN, ADIL (1882–1954). Governor and political adviser. Arslan came from a **family** of **Lebanese Druze** notables. He remained loyal to the **Ottoman Empire** during **World War I** and served **Amir Faysal** as governor of Mount Lebanon and political adviser between 1918 and 1920. A leading figure in the **Istiqlal Party**, he left Syria at the beginning of the **French Mandate** and went to **Transjordan**, where he became a close adviser to Amir Abdallah. In 1923, the British pressured Abdallah to expel him, and he moved to the Hijaz. Arslan then became active in the **Syrian–Palestine Congress**, particularly its radical Pan-Arab wing, which maintained a keen interest in **Palestine's** fate, as well as that of Syria. During the **Great Revolt** of 1925–1927 against **French** rule, Arslan went to Jerusalem to raise funds for the nationalist cause. In the 1930s, he joined the **National Bloc** and became Syria's envoy to Ankara under the government of 1936–1939. He

held a number of high government offices in the early years of independence, including foreign minister under **Husni al-Za'im** in 1949. Soon after taking power, Za'im had Arslan approach the **Iraqis** about the possibility of a Syrian–Iraqi union, but Za'im suddenly switched to an anti-**Hashemite** stance. Arslan's early Pan-Arabism also manifested itself when he refused to support Za'im's secret diplomacy with **Israel**.

ARSLAN, SHAKIB (1869–1946). Perhaps the most prominent activist for Muslim political causes between the world wars. Born into a prominent **Druze family** in **Lebanon**, Arslan's upbringing and aspirations led him to become a **Sunni** Muslim. His high birth entitled him to important offices in the Druze districts of Lebanon during the late **Ottoman** era, when he also gained a reputation as the “prince of eloquence” for his masterly prose. In 1911, Arslan volunteered to join Ottoman forces resisting the Italian invasion of Libya. When he arrived there, he developed a close relationship with Ottoman officers, especially Enver Pasha, who soon thereafter became a member of the **Committee of Union and Progress (CUP)** triumvirate, which ruled the empire from 1913 to 1918. During **World War I**, Arslan staunchly supported the empire against **Arab nationalists** and bitterly opposed the **Arab Revolt** and its **Hashemite** leadership. He believed that a strong Ottoman Empire was the Arabs' only hope for preventing direct European rule and condemned the Arab Revolt as a betrayal of Arabs and **Islam**. Arslan's earlier acquaintance with Enver Pasha put him in good stead with **Jamal Pasha**, another member of the CUP triumvirate and military governor of Syria for much of the war. His loyalty to the empire and association with Jamal Pasha caused many Syrians to blame him for the governor's harsh policies, including deportations and executions of suspected nationalists.

The end of the war found Arslan in Germany, and for the next few years he roamed restlessly between Europe and **Turkey** in search of a viable political cause. During the **French Mandate** era, he made his first commitment to an Arab cause by joining the **Syrian–Palestine Congress** and eventually became one of its representatives to the League of Nations, in large part because he had settled down in Switzerland. When the **Great Revolt** erupted in 1925, Arslan publicized the Syrian cause in European **newspapers** and petitioned the League of Nations' body responsible for mandates, the Permanent Mandates Commission. In November 1925, however, Arslan aroused anger and jealousy in other leaders of the Syrian–Palestine Congress when he agreed to meet with **French** high commissioner Henry de Jouvenel. Their talks resulted in an agreement wherein Arslan insisted on the unity and independence of Syria and **Palestine**, but he conceded the permanence of Greater Lebanon, a French monopoly on military assistance to Syria, and a

30-year military alliance. This accord never developed into an official French offer, but it did deepen divisions within the congress between Arslan's pro-Saudi faction and **Abd al-Rahman Shahbandar**'s pro-Hashemite group.

After the suppression of the Great Revolt, Arslan continued to argue Syria's case before the League of Nations, but he also widened his concerns and became an active inspiration to Arab nationalist movements in North Africa. He briefly returned to Syria in 1937, when the French authorities sought his support for the **Franco-Syrian Treaty**, but his public statements on Palestine and other Arab causes made him unwelcome, and the French asked him to leave before the end of the year.

During **World War II**, Arslan again sided with Germany, this time in the belief that its victory would bring independence to Arabs struggling against French and British imperialism, but he was no longer the effective spokesman of earlier years. Indeed, he spent most of the war in Switzerland fretting over financial difficulties. In October 1946, Arslan left Switzerland for Beirut, where he died two months later.

ARSUZI, ZAKI AL- (1901–1968). Alawi teacher and political activist from **Alexandretta**. After his studies at the Sorbonne in **France**, Arsuzi resided in Antioch and worked as a schoolteacher. From 1938 to 1939, he led the Pan-Arab **League of National Action**'s efforts to oppose **Turkey**'s annexation of Alexandretta. After several arrests, Arsuzi left his home province and resettled in **Damascus**. There he emerged as a leading figure among intellectuals and students in favor of Arab unity and revival. He used the term *ba`th*, or rebirth, when speaking of Arab revival, and his followers claim that **Michel Aflaq** stole the term from Arsuzi. Their ideas had a certain affinity, but the two men never worked together because of personal differences. Consequently, many of Arsuzi's followers, mostly young Alawi students, would join the **Ba`th Party**, while Arsuzi himself never again became active in politics. He spent his later years in poverty, devoting his energies to a work on the Arabic **language**. The **Neo-Ba`th** regime, which included many Alawis who had entered the party as his followers, elevated him to the standing of founding party ideologue and erased Aflaq from official party literature. Arsuzi's loyal admirers in the regime granted him a pension to lift him from poverty.

ART. The heritage of classical **Islamic** art ranges from the Arabic calligraphy adorning public buildings, to miniature paintings illustrating books, to the design of such everyday utensils as vases and bowls. The best-known aspect is the arabesque, a nonfigurative, intricate repetitive design that frequently decorates public buildings in tiles and carved stucco. Only a small number of objects survive from the **Umayyad** and early **Abbasid** eras, but

the much richer artistic record from the **Zangid** era onward testifies to the refined skills of craftsmen creating objects for royal patrons and public use. Wood-carvers turned out exquisite doors, pulpits, and screens for prayer niches, including some of the most complicated geometric patterns ever seen in that medium. Metalworkers crafted brass candleholders, incense burners, ewers, and washing basins inlaid with gold and silver, composed of horizontal bands adorned with either human figures in hunting and combat scenes or calligraphy and vegetal patterns. Other media for artistic creation included ceramic vessels and colored glass lamps to illuminate mosques. Painters and calligraphers embellished manuscript copies of scientific texts, popular tales, and, of course, the Qur'an. During the Islamic era, **Christians** continued to produce **Byzantine**-style icons for churches and homes. In the 18th and 19th centuries, a distinctive local style emerged in **Aleppo** and **Homs**.

The repertoire of modern art in the 20th century has incorporated the historical Christian and Islamic legacies, as well as European movements from impressionism onward. The first paintings on canvas were done in the late **Ottoman** period under the influence of **Turkish** artists. In the **French Mandate** era, a number of prominent **French** painters visited and produced works based on urban settings and rural landscapes. Syrians in turn began to study European art in Rome and Paris. Artists' associations appeared in the major cities during the 1940s and 1950s, when realism was the most common style. Impressionist renditions of landscapes and traditional urban quarters became popular as well until the 1960s, when artists turned to expressionist and abstract styles to convey political and social themes. The **June 1967 War** affected the art scene, just as it did **literature** and **theater**. A number of exhibits concentrated on **Israeli** belligerence and **Palestinian** displacement, portraying them as part of a biblical narrative of suffering and victimization. Similarly, the **Syrian Uprising** has influenced Syrian artists. To support the protest movement, artists have used their canvases to depict the violence and effects of the government crackdown. Many of them have faced intimidation from government forces, and their art can only be displayed after smuggling it to galleries in neighboring countries.

Not all artistic production is an effect of political currents and European influences, or perhaps more exactly for recent decades, of postmodern cosmopolitan trends. Syrian artists have striven to create a local identity by drawing on the country's ancient heritage for motifs and by turning to non-representational art. For centuries before **Islam**, Syria had a rich legacy of sculpture, but the Muslim taboo on idols spelled the end of that art form until recent times. Public sculptures of such national heroes as **Saladin** or the martyrs of the **Battle of Maysalun** contribute to the visual construction of a Syrian national identity. The visual arts resemble the country's literary and theatrical scenes in that all depend on government support for school **education** and subsidies for publications and exhibitions.

ASAD, AL-. The al-Asad **family** rose to dominance in Syrian political life when **Hafiz al-Asad** seized power in a military coup in 1970. The family originated in Qardaha, a small town in the **Jabal Ansariyya**, also known as Jabal Alawi, located east of the port city of **Latakia**. The name Asad (meaning “lion” in Arabic) was first given to Hafiz al-Asad’s father, Ali Sulayman, in 1927, in honor of the cardinal role he played in village society. The nickname was meant to distinguish a powerful, influential, and, at times, merciless leader. Upon assuming the presidency in 1970, Hafiz al-Asad was dubbed the “lion of Damascus” for his fearless and cunning political style. During their four decades in power, members of the extended Asad family took over powerful security and intelligence bodies and also used their influence to enrich themselves.

See also ASAD, ASMA AL-AKHRAS AL- (1975–); ASAD, BASHAR AL- (1965–); ASAD, BUSHRA AL- (1960–); ASAD, FAWWAZ AL- (1962–); ASAD, JAMIL AL- (1932–2004); ASAD, MAHIR AL- (1967–); ASAD, MAJD HAFIZ AL- (1966–2009); ASAD, MUNZIR AL- (1961–); ASAD, RIBAL AL-; ASAD, RIF’AT AL- (1937–); ASAD, SUMAR AL-; MAKHLUF.

ASAD, ASMA AL-AKHRAS AL- (1975–). The wife of **Bashar al-Asad**, born in Acton, London. The daughter of a wealthy expatriate physician originally from **Homs**, Asma received her degree from King’s College before pursuing a career as an investment banker at Deutsche Bank Group and J. P. Morgan. She returned to Syria in 2000 and married Bashar al-Asad. The couple has three children together: **Hafiz al-Asad**, Zayn al-Asad, and Karim al-Asad. As Syria’s first lady in the early 21st century, Asma developed a reputation for being “westernized” and helped give the country a more liberal image. The first lady played a role in civil society and is credited with improving the quantity and quality of Syria’s social and economic development organizations and charities. After the outbreak of the **Syrian Uprising**, Asma lowered her public profile to the point that in early 2013, there were rumors that she had fled the country with her children, but she surfaced at a **Damascus** benefit for soldiers’ widows. *See also* ASAD, AL-.

ASAD, BASHAR AL- (1965–). Syria’s president since July 2000, following the death of his father, **Hafiz al-Asad**. In the early 1990s, Hafiz al-Asad was preparing his oldest son, **Basil al-Asad**, to succeed him, but upon his death in a 1994 automobile accident, he turned to Bashar, who had been in London studying ophthalmology at the time. During the next six years, Hafiz groomed Bashar by entrusting him with various tasks, particularly related to an anticorruption campaign, the introduction of computer technology, foreign investment, privatization, and relations with **Lebanon**. Upon the eld-

er Asad's death, military and security chiefs proved their loyalty to the late president with support for Bashar's succession. More formal roles were played by the People's Assembly, which amended the **constitution's** provision governing the president's minimum age, and by the **Ba'th Party** Regional Command, which made Bashar its secretary-general. His uncle, **Rif al-Asad**, declared the succession unconstitutional, but he had no way to block the transition from his exile in Spain. A referendum in July gave Bashar more than 97 percent of the vote, and he was installed as president on 17 July. The succession occurred smoothly, contrary to the prognostications of observers, who had expected a period of instability and perhaps even collapse of the regime.

For many Syrians, relief at the orderly transfer of power was mixed with hopes that as the representative of a new generation, Bashar might guide the country toward liberal political and economic policies. Political activists publicly called on him to take the first steps toward democracy, including the establishment of a free press and the release of all political prisoners. A handful of activists held salons at their homes to discuss ways to advance **civil society** and democracy. In November 2000, Bashar released 600 men from different opposition groups—the **Muslim Brotherhood**, pro-**Iraqi** Ba'thists, and communists. He also permitted the publication of a private periodical for the first time since 1963. This brief spell of political relaxation, known as the **Damascus Spring**, lasted from the fall of 2000 until early 2001, when Bashar imposed regulations on private political salons. It seems that the political establishment surrounding the new president feared that even a limited amount of political criticism could snowball into an uncontrollable movement. The crackdown even affected two members of the People's Assembly, who launched a hunger strike on behalf of guarantees for the rule of law, an independent judiciary, and limits on the power of the security services.

A second, more superficial phase of political easing took place in 2005. The **Cedar Revolution** in Lebanon and elections in Iraq encouraged Syrian activists to seek political reforms. In the face of mounting international criticism regarding the **Rafiq al-Hariri assassination**, Syrian officials acquiesced and introduced a number of cosmetic changes intended to appease civilians and create a united domestic front. The Syrian cabinet reconsidered citizenship for stateless **Kurds** and discussed allowing multiple political parties in future elections. A few technical **censorship** laws were repealed, and the government promoted some arts exhibits. Political activists issued the **Damascus Declaration for National Democratic Change** in October, calling for the lifting of the **Emergency Law**. The less oppressive climate only lasted a few months, and, by early 2006, the regime had returned to its habit of cracking down on dissent.

When Bashar came to power, the economic situation was manageable but in a chronically difficult condition, with unemployment in the range of 20 to 25 percent, the annual population growth rate at 3.1 percent, and per capita annual income around \$1,000. Most observers predicted that he would follow the “Chinese model” of liberalizing the **economy** while preserving single-party rule, but in his first three years, even steps to open the economy to foreign capital and **trade** were timid, although he did initiate more significant changes in finance, trade, and **tourism** in subsequent years.

Bashar faced particularly challenging regional circumstances because of the failure of **Syrian–Israeli peace talks** in January 2000 and the **Israeli** withdrawal from Lebanon that May. He followed his father’s practice of seeking a broad basis for a strong posture against Israel. This meant, for instance, the continuation of Syria’s military presence in Lebanon in the face of popular demands that Syria withdraw its troops and release Lebanese political prisoners detained in Syria. Bashar made a conciliatory gesture in June 2001, by redeploying troops out of Beirut, but he otherwise kept a firm grip. Like his father, he considered the Lebanese **Shi’i** militia **Hizballah** a military asset for the confrontation with Israel and as insurance against the prospect of a separate Israeli–Lebanese peace treaty. Economic factors also came into consideration because tens of thousands of Syrians worked in Lebanon, thereby easing unemployment in Syria and offering opportunities to powerful figures in the regime to profit from smuggling.

In other regional relations, Bashar pursued the thaw in relations with **Jordan** that his father had initiated and maintained cordial ties with **Egypt** and **Saudi Arabia**, while furthering the process of reconciliation with Iraq until the U.S. invasion deposed Saddam Husayn’s regime in the spring of 2003. The prospect of a long American occupation in a neighboring country at a time when the **United States** was reconsidering its traditional policy of engagement with **Damascus** created new pressures and uncertainties for the untested Syrian leader. He passed through a particularly difficult phase after the Hariri assassination in February 2005. In the face of massive anti-Syrian demonstrations in Lebanon and international pressure, Bashar withdrew Syrian forces from Lebanon by the end of April, ending nearly three decades of military presence there.

When mass protest movements erupted in Tunisia, Egypt, and Yemen in early 2011, Bashar assumed that his firm opposition to Israeli policies would immunize him against protests, but he was wrong. Starting in March 2011, protesters called on the government to institute political reforms, reinstate civil rights, and repeal the Emergency Law, which suspended constitutional rights. While Bashar eventually responded with some political reforms, including ending the state of emergency that had been in place since 1963, for many protesters it was too little and too late, especially since the reforms came alongside a violent crackdown, which overshadowed any attempts at

restructuring. In the eyes of the opposition, the brutal violence used by regime forces against unarmed demonstrators irreparably damaged Bashar's legitimacy. Not all Syrians sided with the opposition, however, and legislative elections in May 2012 enjoyed a wide turnout, which the government pointed to as a sign of public support. *See also* ASAD, AL-; FOREIGN POLICY.

ASAD, BASIL AL- (1962–1994). The eldest son of **Hafiz al-Asad** and considered the heir apparent until his death in a car accident near **Damascus** Airport. Basil was popular among military officers and held the equivalent rank of major in the Syrian Army. He also served as chief of presidential security and promulgated an anticorruption campaign within the regime. His unexpected death altered the succession scenario and made his younger brother, **Bashar al-Asad**, the next in line. *See also* ASAD, AL-.

ASAD, BUSHRA AL- (1960–). The oldest child of **Hafiz al-Asad**. Best known for her stubborn and intellectual personality, Bushra obtained a degree in pharmacy from the University of **Damascus**. While women in the Asad family seldom play a prominent role in Syrian politics, Bushra's close friendship with **Buthayna Sha`ban**, political and media adviser to President **Bashar al-Asad**, as well as her controversial marriage to **Asaf Shawkat**, deputy chief of staff of the Syrian Armed Forces, gave her behind-the-scenes political influence. As a pharmacologist, Bushra strove to improve Syria's pharmaceutical industry and contributed to the country's self-sufficiency in the production of medicines. During the **Syrian Uprising**, her husband was killed in a bombing of National Security Headquarters in Damascus in July 2012. A few months later, she left Syria to live in the United Arab Emirates. *See also* ASAD, AL-.

ASAD, FAWWAZ AL- (1962–). The cousin of **Bashar al-Asad** and son of former parliamentarian **Jamil al-Asad**. Fawwaz was sanctioned by the **European Union** in May 2011 for his involvement with the **Shabiha** militia in repressing antigovernment demonstrations during the **Syrian Uprising**. *See also* ASAD, AL-.

ASAD, HAFIZ AL- (1930–2000). President of Syria from February 1971 until June 2000. Hafiz came to power in the **Corrective Movement** of November 1970. He was born in Qurdaha, a village in the **Jabal Ansariyya**, the historical home of the **Alawis**. He got his education in the nearby city of **Latakia**, where he met the Ba`thist teacher **Wahib al-Ghanim**, who imparted the ideas of **Zaki al-Arsuzi** and recruited Hafiz to the **Ba`th Party**. In 1951, Hafiz entered the **Homs** Military Academy and enrolled in a special

training course for pilots in Syria's nascent air force. For the next several years, he remained active in Ba`thist politics and continued his career as an air force pilot. During the **United Arab Republic (UAR)** era, Hafiz's unit was transferred to **Egypt**, where he and other Ba`thist officers shared their resentment of party leaders **Michel Aflaq** and **Salah al-Din al-Bitar** for betraying the party when they agreed to its dissolution as a condition for creating the UAR. Hafiz and four other officers stationed in Cairo founded the **Military Committee**, which was dedicated to rebuilding the Ba`th and gaining power in Syria.

After the breakup of the UAR, Hafiz returned to Syria, but the new regime distrusted Ba`thists and removed him from the air force, assigning him to a desk job in the Ministry of Economy. For the next 18 months, he and his colleagues on the Military Committee plotted a coup. An attempt in April 1962 failed, but the **March 8, 1963 Coup** succeeded. In the new regime, Hafiz was promoted from captain to lieutenant colonel and appointed commander of an air base near **Damascus**. Later that year, he was elected to the party's Regional Command. His chief task, however, was to make the **armed forces** a bastion of the Ba`th Party. He purged the officer corps, promoted men loyal to the party, and invited Arsuzi to lecture on party ideals before the troops. When strife within the Military Committee surfaced in 1964, Hafiz sided with **Salah al-Jadid**, and he was rewarded with promotion to commander of the Syrian Air Force. After the **February 23, 1966 Coup**, which brought the **Neo-Ba`th** to power, he became minister of defense. In that capacity, he helped organize **Palestinian** commando raids against **Israel** that triggered retaliations against Syrian forces in the **Golan Heights**. From these skirmishes erupted the crisis of May 1967, which led to the **June 1967 War**, in which Syria lost the Golan Heights. Many blamed Hafiz for Syria's miserable military performance during the war, but he argued that it was the fault of policies pursued by dogmatic radicals in the Neo-Ba`th. He further argued that the time had come for the regime to back away from its revolutionary program to concentrate the country's resources on the military confrontation with Israel. His comrade from the Military Committee and the regime's strongman, Jadid, took the side of the radicals. Hafiz then consolidated his power base in the armed forces by getting rid of men loyal to Jadid. In February 1969, Hafiz dispatched units to take over the party **newspapers** and the national radio stations and, in so doing, proved his mastery of the armed forces.

In September 1970, civil war broke out in **Jordan** between the government and Palestinian guerrillas. Hafiz sent Syrian armor into northern Jordan to support the Palestinians but withheld the air force, thereby making possible an effective Jordanian counterattack that drove out the Syrian tanks. At the end of October, Jadid made a bid to dismiss Hafiz, but in the trial of strength between the last two members of the Military Committee on the

political scene, Hafiz easily prevailed. His men arrested his opponents, including Jadid, in a bloodless coup that Hafiz dubbed the “Corrective Movement.” At first, he designated a **Sunni**, Ahmad al-Khatib, to serve as head of state, but in February 1971, Hafiz restored the presidency, which the Neo-Ba`th had abolished, and occupied the office himself. This was a bold move because it was the first time that a non-Sunni was president of Syria.

Upon taking power, Hafiz “corrected” what he considered the excesses of the previous regime. He eased restraints on travel and **trade**, made overtures to the urban Sunni bourgeoisie by announcing plans to liberalize the **economy**, and reined in the **security forces**. He further broadened the regime’s base in March 1972 by forming the National Progressive Front, a coalition of political parties dominated by the Ba`th (the other parties were the **Syrian Communist Party**, the Arab Socialist Movement, the Socialist Unity Party, and the Arab Socialist Union). He also reshuffled the Ba`th Party’s Regional Command, installing men loyal to him and assuming the position of secretary-general. For the most part, these moves gained popular backing from Syrians opposed to the Neo-Ba`th’s strict exclusion of other political forces and its dogmatic socialism. He also altered Syria’s **foreign policy**, which, under his predecessors’ radicalism, had isolated Syria in the Arab world. Hafiz mended relations with **Egypt, Saudi Arabia**, and other Arab countries. He was particularly eager to develop a close working relationship with Egyptian president Anwar Sadat to forge an Arab military capability to confront Israel. As for the superpowers, Hafiz cultivated a steady relationship with the Soviet Union because of Syria’s dependence on Moscow for arms, while he continued the break in relations with the **United States** that had occurred following the June 1967 War.

Hafiz’s priority was the retrieval of the Golan Heights, and in pursuit of that end he and Sadat made secret plans for a surprise attack on Israel. In April 1973, the two leaders agreed on plans for the **October 1973 War**. A few weeks before the war, Syria restored relations with Jordan in a move to shore up Arab solidarity. Although the war resulted in additional territorial losses, the armed forces’ initial success and ability to stop Israel’s counterattack further bolstered Hafiz’s standing in Syria. After the war, U.S. secretary of state Henry Kissinger engaged in “shuttle diplomacy,” traveling back and forth among Israel, Egypt, Syria, Moscow, and Washington. His first achievement was an agreement between Egypt and Israel to disengage their forces in Sinai in January 1974. Kissinger then managed to mediate a disengagement accord between Syria and Israel on the Golan front in May 1974. This accord stipulated the stationing of the **United Nations Disengagement Observer Force** in a buffer zone between Syrian and Israeli forces. But that was as far as American mediation between Syria and Israel would go, and a new stalemate ensued, albeit stabilized by the buffer zone. When Sadat embarked on his solitary endeavor to reach peace with Israel, Hafiz’s position

became more vulnerable, but he was able to convince the Soviet Union to assist his massive buildup of the armed forces, and he gained access to the deep pockets of Arab Gulf states to pay for new military equipment.

In the mid-1970s, Hafiz was preoccupied by the **Lebanese Civil War**, in which he ordered the Syrian Army to intervene in June 1976. When Syrian troops fought against Palestinian and Lebanese Sunni forces, much of Syrian popular opinion was outraged, and some believed that Hafiz was motivated by Alawi prejudice against Sunnis. This perception fueled smoldering resentment among Syrian Sunnis not reconciled to having an Alawi president. Conditions for unrest were augmented by deteriorating economic conditions in 1976 and 1977. Furthermore, morale among Syrian **Islamic fundamentalists**, including the **Muslim Brotherhood**, shot up with the triumph of the Islamic Revolution in **Iran** in 1979. This combination of factors contributed to the uprising of **Islamist** and secular forces that threatened to topple the Asad regime from 1979 to 1982. The government weathered the storm by relying on fierce repression and strong support from the Ba`th Party's partisans. At the same time, the regime buttressed its standing among the large number of **public-sector** employees by raising salaries in 1980. To take some steam out of urban middle-class frustrations, the regime also eased constraints on imports. The Islamist revolt peaked in the first week of February 1982, when the Muslim Brotherhood took over **Hama** and called on Muslims to rise up throughout the rest of the country. No other uprisings occurred, and Hafiz sent army units and special forces to regain control of the city. In two weeks of fighting, between 5,000 and 20,000 people were killed. The suppression of the revolt in Hama marked the defeat of the Islamist revolt.

Not long after Hafiz survived that challenge, Israel invaded **Lebanon** in June 1982, beginning the **Lebanese War of 1982**. Syria suffered initial reverses and had to endure the specter of Israeli domination over much of Lebanon, thereby posing a new threat to Syria, but by mobilizing Lebanese opposed to Israel and its Lebanese allies, Hafiz managed to turn the tables so that by the end of 1985, Israeli forces withdrew to a narrow strip of territory along the Israel–Lebanon border. His achievement in Lebanon was made more difficult by his isolation in the Arab world because he supported Iran against **Iraq** in the war that broke out between them in 1980.

Questions about Hafiz's durability arose in November 1983, when he disappeared from public view for several days, prompting rumors of serious illness and anxieties about the unsettled issue of succession. The specific nature of his illness was never made public, and when he reemerged, he had to overcome a bid for power by his younger brother, **Rif'at al-Asad**. The president decisively won the showdown and forced Rif'at to spend most of the next several years abroad in the Soviet Union and **France**. By the late 1980s, Hafiz's regime was on a sounder footing than it had been since 1974,

its worst problems stemming from a prolonged period of difficulty in the economy, in particular a shortage of foreign exchange. Beginning in 1986, the government took measures to reform the economy by encouraging a larger role for the private sector, and these measures succeeded in stimulating a mild economic recovery.

When Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990, Hafiz decided to support the U.S. initiative for defending Saudi Arabia against a possible Iraqi attack. Syria's participation in the anti-Iraq alliance paid handsome dividends, including large cash payments from Saudi Arabia, a free hand to reconstitute Lebanon according to the **Ta'if Accord**, and better relations with Washington at a time when the Soviet Union was coming unraveled. After the war, the United States urged Syria to attend an international peace conference to resolve the Arab–Israeli dispute, and, in July 1991, Hafiz agreed to send a delegation to the **Madrid Conference**. Bilateral talks between Syria and Israel sputtered along for the next eight years but failed to reach an agreement in which Syria would regain all of the Golan Heights and Israel would feel secure in a new era of normalized relations with its longtime adversary.

The last five years of Hafiz's presidency were eventful in the realm of foreign policy, but they were perhaps most notable for the way he orchestrated his son **Bashar al-Asad**'s succession as Syria's leader. As was the case for most of his rule, Hafiz focused on regional affairs, especially the efforts to bring **Syrian–Israeli peace talks** to a successful conclusion. While Syria and Israel made strides toward an agreement when the Labor Party's Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres held office (1992–1996), the talks were suddenly suspended in March 1996, after Damascus refused to condemn a wave of Palestinian suicide bombings. Two months later, Likud Party leader Benjamin Netanyahu was elected, and for the next three years, peace talks were suspended because of his refusal to meet Syrian demands that he resume talks where his predecessors had left off. During Netanyahu's tenure, Hafiz tried to forge a regional coalition that included Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Iran to counter the newly formed Israeli–**Turkish** relationship aligned with Washington. He also seized the opportunity offered by the **United Nations** Oil-for-Food Programme for Iraq to revive bilateral trade and reopen the oil pipeline. The regional situation changed with the May 1999 election of Labor leader Ehud Barak, whose bold pronouncements injected new hope for the peace process. In January 2000, Barak met with Foreign Minister **Faruq al-Shara'** in **Shepherdstown**, West Virginia, to pave the way for a final deal. This initiative foundered as well, and Barak pulled Israeli forces out of Lebanon in May.

On the domestic front, Hafiz groomed his son Bashar for succession by gradually increasing his "portfolio" to include the sensitive matter of relations with Lebanon and an anticorruption drive to bolster his legitimacy. When it came to the fundamental distribution of political power and state

control over the economy, however, Hafiz chose to stand pat with the formula that had kept him in power and maintained stability for 30 years. The steps to elevate Bashar included the dismissal of the powerful military intelligence chief **Ali Duba** in February and a cabinet reshuffle in March. A Ba'th Party Congress was scheduled to take place in mid-June, when it was anticipated that Bashar would be given a seat on the Regional Command, but Hafiz died on 10 June, one week before the congress was due to open.

Assessments of Hafiz's regime tend to acknowledge that he brought internal political stability to a country that had been arguably the most unstable in the Arab world. He also consolidated a secular political order during a period when Islamic fundamentalism threatened governments and such religious minorities as Arab **Christians** and non-Sunni Muslims. On the other hand, his stern rule stifled dissent by imposing a security apparatus that routinely and arbitrarily violated **human rights**. Moreover, his intervention in Lebanese and Palestinian affairs to harness them to his vision of Syrian, if not Arab, interests aggravated regional political divisions. Furthermore, his refusal to liberalize the economy may have spared Syrians the difficulties of structural adjustment, but he may merely have delayed inevitably necessary measures for the sake of short-term political objectives at high economic cost. *See also* ASAD, AL-.

ASAD, JAMIL AL- (1932–2004). Brother of former president **Hafiz al-Asad**, Jamil was a member of the Syrian Parliament for several years until his death in 2004. Despite their familial ties, the two brothers had a distant relationship. Jamil kept a low political profile and was not included in Hafiz's inner circle. He was a religious man and led the Ali al-Murtada militia in the 1980s, which served a dual purpose of assisting **Alawi** Muslims on the pilgrimage to Mecca and providing a minor security wing for younger brother **Rif'at al-Asad's** Defense Companies. In March 2003, Jamil was elected to the People's Assembly from the **Latakia** province. Before his death at the age of 71, he voiced reservations regarding the succession of nephew **Bashar al-Asad** to the presidency. *See also* ASAD, AL-.

ASAD, MAHIR AL- (1967–). The youngest brother of **Bashar al-Asad**, Mahir received a degree in business from the University of **Damascus** before pursuing a career as a military officer and commander. He was never a serious contender to replace his father as president because of his aggressive and thuggish behavior. In 2005, Mahir was listed by **United Nations** investigators as an accomplice in the assassination of Lebanese prime minister **Rafiq al-Hariri**. During that same year, he was targeted in an anticorruption campaign alongside cousin **Rami al-Makhlef**. During the **Syrian Uprising**, Mahir played a central and brutal role in suppressing demonstrations

throughout the country. His violent methods killed hundreds of civilians and garnered a tremendous amount of criticism. The international community responded to these acts of violence with numerous sanctions. On 29 April 2011, U.S. president Barack Obama issued Executive Order 13572 targeting Mahir for conducting military campaigns against civilians as part of a crackdown on antigovernment protests. The **European Union** also imposed sanctions on him, identifying Mahir as the “principal overseer of violence against demonstrators.” *See also* ASAD, AL-.

ASAD, MAJD HAFIZ AL- (1966–2009). The younger brother of President **Bashar al-Asad**, Majd graduated from the University of **Damascus** in 1989 with a degree in economics. He suffered from chronic illness and was often hidden from public view. He died in December 2009. *See also* ASAD, AL-.

ASAD, MUNZIR AL- (1961–). The oldest son of **Jamil al-Asad** was accused of smuggling weapons for **Iraqi** insurgents after the 2003 U.S. invasion. Munzir was arrested in 2005 at the Beirut International Airport on suspicion of arms trafficking. In May 2011, he was sanctioned by the **European Union** for his association with the **Shabiha** militia and its brutal repression of demonstrators. *See also* ASAD, AL-.

ASAD, RIBAL AL-. A son of **Rif`at al-Asad** known for protesting the **corruption** and authoritarianism of the Asad regime. While living abroad, Ribal founded the Organization for Democracy and Freedom in Syria. He is a strong advocate for the implementation of political reforms and has spoken out against the omnipresent influence of **Iran**. During the **Syrian Uprising**, Ribal has given several interviews and written numerous articles strongly condemning the regime’s military crackdown. He has also cautioned government officials against the possibility of regional war should violence in Syria continue. *See also* ASAD, AL-.

ASAD, RIF`AT AL- (1937–). The younger brother of **Hafiz al-Asad** was one of Syria’s three vice presidents from 1984 to 1998. Under his older brother’s influence, Rif`at joined the **Ba`th Party** as a youth and entered the **Homs** Military Academy. During the first Ba`thist regime, Rif`at took over command of a special armed unit charged with defending the **Military Committee** and its allies in the party. After Hafiz seized power in November 1970, he enlarged Rif`at’s armed force, named it the Defense Companies, and assigned it the task of protecting the regime against any internal enemies. In the late 1970s, Rif`at wielded considerable power as the president’s brother and commander of the country’s most powerful armed unit. At its height, the Defense Companies numbered more than 50,000 men and had its own

air, armor, and artillery units. As Rif'at became more influential, he also gained notoriety for leading an extravagant and debauched personal life, and thus turned into a magnet for animosity toward the regime.

Rif'at reached his greatest influence during the **Islamist** uprising spearheaded by the **Muslim Brotherhood**. He advocated ruthless repression as the answer to the guerrillas' armed struggle. His Defense Companies participated in the April 1980 suppression of dissent in **Aleppo**. After an assassination attempt against the president in June, Rif'at's men massacred several hundred Muslim Brothers held at a prison at Tadmur (**Palmyra**). He led the government's campaign to suppress the 1982 uprising in **Hama** that killed thousands and destroyed much of the city. He misplayed his hand when the president fell ill in November 1983. Rif'at took steps to seize control in the event of his brother's demise and in doing so contradicted the president's express orders for the formation of a collective authority to govern in his absence. After the president recovered in late November, he took several steps to break Rif'at's power, including the transfer of command of the Defense Companies. The president also designated three vice presidents, including Rif'at, who correctly figured that the appointment actually meant demotion to a purely titular role. The younger Asad responded at the end of March 1984 with a bold bid to take over the regime, but the president made him climb down by sheer force of his personality. Two months later, Hafiz sent Rif'at to Moscow on a "diplomatic" mission that ended in a prolonged exile, first to Switzerland and then France. In his absence, the president defanged the Defense Companies and reassigned some of its men to other units. Hafiz then allowed Rif'at to return in November, still one of three vice presidents but unable to rebuild his power base.

After falling afoul of his older brother, Rif'at played the role of a spoiler. Even though he officially remained a vice president, he spent almost eight years in Europe before Hafiz allowed him to return in 1992 for their mother's funeral. Rif'at's souring on the regime became public in 1997, when his son, **Sumar al-Asad**, started a satellite television channel called Arab News Network that aired criticism of the regime. The next two years, however, saw his final fall from any vestige of official influence. First, in February 1998, Hafiz dismissed him as vice president. Then, in the fall of 1999, the government launched a campaign to arrest his backers and shut down an illegal private port he operated in **Latakia**, where fighting erupted between his men and government forces before the latter overwhelmed the renegades. He nevertheless refused to cease his insistence on keeping a high profile in his quest for power. For example, he attended the funeral of Morocco's King Hassan II and consulted with Yasir Arafat. When Hafiz died in June 2000, his brother was actually barred from entering the country for the funeral, and he in turn declared that **Bashar al-Asad**'s succession was illegal. In view of his long

exile and the government's dispersal of his once-feared paramilitary force, Rif'at was in no position to do more than annoy his nephew, the new president. *See also* ASAD, AL-.

ASAD, SUMAR AL- A son of **Rif'at al-Asad**, Sumar was director of the Arab News Network, a satellite television channel that supported his father's campaigns against **Hafiz al-Asad** in the 1990s. The same crackdown that destroyed Rif'at's support system in 1999 also targeted several of Sumar's friends, ending his political significance. *See also* ASAD, AL-.

ASALI, SABRI AL- (1903–1976). Three-time prime minister of Syria in the 1950s. Asali's political activism dated back to his participation in the **Great Revolt** of 1925–1927, for which the **French Mandate** authorities exiled him. In Cairo, he joined the **Syrian–Palestine Congress** and developed a close association with **Shukri al-Quwwatli**. He returned to Syria in 1928 and opened a law practice in **Damascus**. In 1935, Asali became head of the **League of National Action**, but the following year, the league expelled him for joining the **National Bloc**. As a member of the Bloc and its successor the **National Party**, Asali won parliamentary seats in 1936, 1943, and 1947. In the early independence era, he served in several cabinets.

Following **Husni al-Za'im**'s March 1949 coup and National Party leader Quwwatli's flight to Egypt, Asali took over the party's leadership. He achieved his greatest influence from 1954 to 1958, when he was prime minister a number of times. From 1 March until 11 June 1954, he headed a pro-Western cabinet inclined to pursue unity with **Iraq**. A few days before his fall, he secretly met with an Iraqi representative to discuss ways to implement the **Fertile Crescent Plan**. Asali again assumed the office on 13 February 1955, this time with the support of neutralist forces opposed to Syria's adherence to the **Baghdad Pact**, and he aligned the country with **Egypt** and **Saudi Arabia**, but this government fell in September. Asali became prime minister one last time in June 1956, when he headed a cabinet that allotted two key portfolios (Foreign Relations and Economy) to the **Ba'ath Party**. It was this government that negotiated Syria's merger with Egypt in the **United Arab Republic (UAR)**. Asali became a vice president in the UAR, but President Gamal Abd al-Nasser made him resign in October 1958. In March 1963, Asali was one of several prominent politicians whom the Ba'athist regime formally stripped of their civil rights.

ASHRAF. Hereditary body in Muslim societies that claims descent from the Prophet Muhammad. In Syrian history, the ashraf of **Aleppo** became organized as a distinct political-military body in the 18th century and contended

for power with the **janissaries** stationed in the city. Conflict was particularly sharp during the last three decades of the century, until a janissary massacre of ashraf in 1798.

ASLAN, ALI (1933–). Former Syrian Army chief of staff and confidant of President **Hafiz al-Asad**. Aslan joined the Syrian Army at the age of 23 and participated in the military coup that brought Hafiz al-Asad to power. Their close friendship opened several doors for Aslan. In the 1970s and 1980s, he commanded the 1st Infantry Division and 5th Infantry Division of the Syrian Army, served as chief of operations for the Syrian Army General Staff, led troops in the **October 1973 War**, and oversaw Syrian forces in the **Lebanese War of 1982**. In 1998, Aslan was appointed chief of staff of the Syrian Armed Forces. He was a strong advocate for mandatory military service and negotiated arms deals with several countries, including **Russia, China, Iran**, and North Korea. The general retired in 2002, paving the way for a younger generation of officers loyal to President **Bashar al-Asad**.

ASSASSIN. *See* NIZARI.

ASSYRIANS. Nestorian Christians who speak a dialect of Syriac, the Assyrians were once widely spread throughout the Middle East, but, in the early 20th century, they mostly lived in eastern **Turkey**, northern **Iraq**, and northwestern **Iran** near Lake Urmiah. During **World War I**, they enlisted **Russian** support in a revolt against the **Ottomans** but were defeated and forced to flee into Iran. The British then sent 25,000 Assyrians gathered at Hamadan in western Iran to a **refugee** camp near Baghdad. They desired to be repatriated to their ancestral home inside Turkey, but the new Turkish government refused to admit them and the British encouraged them to settle in Iraq. These non-Arab Christians wanted to retain their autonomy and distrusted the Iraqi authorities, who in turn regarded them with suspicion, in large part for their willingness to form a special military force under British command. When Iraq became independent in 1930, the government decommissioned the Assyrian “Levies,” but strains persisted between the authorities and the Assyrians. In June 1933, a skirmish between Assyrians and the Iraqi Army sparked an army massacre of several hundred Assyrians. Panic spread and 9,000 Assyrians fled into Syria, where they settled along the **Khabur River** in **Jazira** province. For eight years, the League of Nations operated a special administration to assist their settlement and economic integration.

Today, the largest concentration of Assyrians is found in **al-Qamishli**, settled in 1925. Smaller communities live in **Aleppo**, **al-Hasaka**, and **Homs**, the site of the patriarchate. They established private schools that give instruction in their **language** in the Aramaic alphabet, and they have maintained a

vibrant cultural life through the church, clubs, and scouts. These associations perform plays and stage art exhibitions to keep their **minority** culture alive. Song and dance troupes perform at Syrian folklore festivals. For a number of years after Syrian independence, the Assyrians published their own periodicals. Their most famous cultural figure is John Aleksan, a writer and historian. **Arab nationalist** policies since 1963 aspire to dilute the concentration of Syria's various minorities and assimilate them by placing schools under the Ministry of Education and encouraging Arabs to settle around al-Qamishli.

ATABEGS. Term that generally refers to dignitaries in the **Saljuk** regime. In the Syrian context, the Atabegs were military slaves, or **mamluks**, who acted as the regents of the Saljuk princes of **Damascus** and **Aleppo**. In 1104, Duqaq, the last Saljuk prince of Damascus, died, and the Atabeg Tughtagin ruled in his own right. Upon his death in 1128, power passed to his son Buri, and the Burid line lasted until 1154 and the **Zangid** conquest of Damascus by **Nur al-Din Mahmud**, himself from a line of northern Syrian Atabegs. The Burid Atabegs governed Damascus and its environs, a small territory squeezed between the **Fatimids** in **Egypt**, the Franks of the first **Crusade**, and their most dangerous enemies, the Zangid Atabegs of northern Syria. The last Saljuk prince of Aleppo died in 1113, and there followed 15 years of struggle for control of Aleppo among Muslim and Crusader powers. This contest concluded in 1128, with the entry of the Atabeg **Imad al-Din al-Zangi**, who had already established his rule over Mosul in northern **Iraq**. He and his successors, known as the Zangids, were often involved in warfare against the Crusaders.

ATASI, HASHIM AL- (1876–1960). Prime minister under **Amir Faysal** in 1920 and a founding member and first chief of the **National Bloc**. Born in **Homs**, Atasi was one of the foremost nationalist politicians during the **French Mandate**. He headed the Syrian delegation that negotiated the **Franco-Syrian Treaty of 1936**, and he then became president of Syria during the National Bloc government of 1936–1939. In the early independence period, he was a founding member of the northern-oriented **People's Party** and served as prime minister under **Sami al-Hinnawi's** short-lived regime. Atasi later became president under **Adib al-Shishakli's** first regime, but he resigned after Shishakli's November 1951 military coup and dissolution of parliament. He then emerged as a central figure in the movement that overthrew Shishakli in February 1954. At the age of 78, Atasi became president following Shishakli's removal, but he resigned in September 1955.

ATASI, NUR AL-DIN AL- (c. 1929–1992). Medical doctor and a member of the radical **Neo-Ba`th**. In the first **Ba`th Party** regime, Atasi was a member of the **National Revolutionary Command Council**, minister of the interior, and then deputy prime minister. In the Neo-Ba`thist regime, this **Sunni** from a respected **Homs family** was head of state, but he sided with **Salah al-Jadid** against **Hafiz al-Asad** in the party's internecine struggle. When Asad's faction prevailed in November 1970, Atasi was thrown into prison. He was released in August 1992 because of poor **health** and died a few months later in Paris.

ATRASH, SULTAN AL- (1887–1982). **Druze** leader of the **Great Revolt** of 1925–1927 against the **French Mandate** and a member of the foremost clan in **Jabal Druze**. At the beginning of the mandate, the **French** tried to cooperate with the Atrash chiefs, but Sultan al-Atrash sought to minimize France's authority in Jabal Druze. From 1922 to 1923, he led an uprising against the French but was forced to flee to **Transjordan**. Two years later, however, he was back in Syria and planned a better organized, more widespread revolt. In July 1925, Atrash launched an uprising that expelled the French from Jabal Druze and then spread to the rest of Syria. When the French crushed the revolt two years later, Atrash fled first to Transjordan and then Arabia. While in Transjordan, he developed links with its **Hashemite** ruler, Amir Abdallah, and sustained them for many years after his return to Syria. Atrash returned from his exile at Kerak in May 1937. His ties with Abdallah were part of a more general connection between the Hashemites and Druzes for the next two decades. During the early independence period, Atrash was prominent in the affairs of Jabal Druze, although his clan's power declined.

ATTAR, ISAM AL- (1925–). A **Damascus** high school teacher who became leader of the Syrian **Muslim Brotherhood** from 1957 until his exile in 1964. Attar was not known as a religious leader, but he was close to the organization's first leader, **Mustafa al-Siba'i**, and he was married to the daughter of a prominent sheikh. Shortly after Attar became leader of the Muslim Brotherhood, the **United Arab Republic (UAR)** banned the organization because of **Egyptian** president Gamal Abd al-Nasser's hostility to the movement, which had violently opposed him during the 1950s. The Muslim Brotherhood reemerged following Syria's secession from the UAR and won 10 seats in the December 1961 elections to parliament. Attar was one of the Muslim Brotherhood's candidates to gain a seat, but when the **Ba`th Party** came to power in 1963, the group again faced a hostile regime. Attar's public sermons against the Ba`th's secularism led the regime to briefly imprison him. In 1964, he went to Mecca for the pilgrimage, and when he tried to

return home, the authorities refused to allow him entry. For two years, he resided in **Lebanon** and was then expelled. Meanwhile, the Ba`thists banned the Muslim Brotherhood. In 1968, Attar went to West Germany to direct an **Islamic** center and publish an Islamic periodical.

Attar represented the Muslim Brotherhood's moderate wing, which opposed armed struggle against the government. In 1972, he had to relinquish his leadership to more militant elements determined to pursue a violent strategy in a bid to overthrow the government, but the Damascus faction remained loyal to him and his voice continued to matter in Syrian Islamist circles. In the middle of 1980, his journal came around to supporting the armed struggle against the Ba`thist regime. In retaliation, agents of the Syrian government murdered Attar's wife in Germany in March 1981. Given the depth of the regime's enmity toward him, it was peculiar that his sister, **Najah al-Attar**, served as minister of culture for many years.

In the early days of the **Syrian Uprising**, Attar participated in a meeting of opposition groups in Istanbul even though he was no longer an official in the Muslim Brotherhood. At the meeting, he spoke about the inevitability of the fall of the Asad regime and claimed that the Muslim Brotherhood could be a force for democracy and would not promote **Sunni** violence against Alawis.

ATTAR, NAJAH AL- (1933–). Syria's first female vice president, appointed to the office in 2006. A native of **Damascus**, Attar received a Ph.D. in Arabic literature from the University of Edinburgh. As minister of culture from 2000 and 2006, she had a liberal reputation and was known for permitting the expression of a range of perspectives. Her appointment to the Council of Ministers was considered a step forward for **women's** rights and recognition in the Arab world.

AYN JALUT, BATTLE OF. On 3 September 1260, **Mamluk** and **Mongol** forces met in one of the major battles of Muslim history at this site, where, according to legend, David slew Goliath. The Mamluk sultan Qutuz led his troops from **Egypt** to meet the advancing Mongols, who had swept south through Syria, brushing aside the feeble **Ayyubid** princes of central Syria. The Mamluk sultan and the chief commander of the vanguard, **Baybars**, gathered a much larger force than the Mongols had mustered and inflicted a decisive defeat on the Central Asian invaders, the first such military setback in more than four decades of Mongol assaults on Muslim armies. The outcome of the battle ended the immediate Mongol threat to Egypt and marked the beginning of the Mamluks' rise to power over Syria.

AYYUBID DYNASTY. The **Kurdish** clansmen of Najm al-Din Ayyub rose to prominence through service to the **Zangid** rulers of Mosul and **Aleppo**. One of Ayyub's kinsmen, **Saladin**, established dynastic rule over **Egypt** in 1171, and over most of Syria by 1183. His successors divided their empire into autonomous hereditary principalities centered in Aleppo, **Damascus**, **Hama**, and **Homs**, while the main branch of the dynasty ruled Egypt. During their 90-year rule, the Ayyubids fought one another as often as they fought the **Crusader** states, with which they often negotiated truces. Their tolerance toward the Franks led them to allow the first Italian merchants to establish themselves in Damascus. The last Ayyubid ruler of Egypt, al-Salih Ayyub, relied on military slaves, or **mamluks**, to an unprecedented degree. The ethnic homogeneity of his mamluks and their isolation from Egyptian society contributed to their determination to seize power in 1250, an event that led to the establishment of the **Mamluk sultanate**. Ten years later, the **Mongol** invasion crushed the remaining Ayyubid domains in Syria.

AZM. The most prominent political **family** in Syria during the 18th century. Isma'il Pasha al-Azm (d. 1730) launched his clan's fortunes when the **Ottomans** appointed him governor of central Syrian districts, then of Tripoli, and, in 1725, of **Damascus**. During his tenure, **janissary** factions created troubles in the city. He promoted the careers of his brother Sulayman and son Ibrahim as governors of Tripoli and Sidon. Isma'il fell from favor in Istanbul in 1730 and was exiled to Crete. Sulayman Pasha (d. 1743) served as governor of Tripoli, and then of Damascus, from 1733 to 1738 and 1741 to 1743. He was no more effective than his brother Isma'il in quelling janissary unruliness. Upon his death, his nephew As'ad (d. 1758) became the next Azm governor of Damascus and served for an unusually long time (1743–1757). His long tenure can be attributed to his crushing of the local janissaries in 1746. This enabled him to establish his unchallenged authority over the city. He used some of his family's vast wealth to construct a splendid monument to 18th-century Ottoman Arab architecture and art, the Azm Palace. As'ad was also known for relaxing restraints on **Christians**; for instance, he allowed them to drink alcohol in public. His rule represented the apex of Azm influence in Syria, as other members of the clan governed Sidon, Tripoli, **Aleppo**, and even Mosul. As'ad himself ultimately fell from grace with Ottoman officials, was forced to give up his post, and was executed in 1758.

For the next 13 years, it appeared that the era of Azm prominence had ended, but, in 1771, the Ottomans appointed Isma'il's grandson, Muhammad al-Azm (d. 1783), governor of Damascus. During his first tenure, the governor of southern Syria, Zahir al-Umar, built up his power at the expense of the province of Damascus. The Ottomans dismissed Muhammad for failing to cope with Zahir and his Egyptian ally, the **mamluk** Ali Bey, but Muhammad returned to the post the following year. For the remainder of his second

tenure (which ended when he died), Muhammad witnessed the fall of Zahir al-Umar and the rise of **Ahmad Pasha al-Jazzar**. He did, however, generously support urban construction and patronized religious and literary activities. The last member of the clan to govern Damascus was Abdallah Pasha. He held office three times between 1790 and 1808. He also served as governor of Tripoli and then Aleppo. During his time, Syria was threatened by **Wahhabi** raids from Arabia and a **French** invasion led by **Napoleon Bonaparte**. While the Ottomans did not appoint any more members of the Azm clan to govern Damascus, the clan remained one of the country's wealthiest and most influential families well into the 20th century.

AZM, HAQQI AL- (1864–1955). First prime minister of an elected Syrian government in 1932, until the **French** dismissed him in 1934. During the late **Ottoman** era, Azm held posts in the civil service but then became active in **Arab nationalist** politics and joined the **Ottoman Party of Administrative Decentralization**, which formed in 1912. At the start of the **French Mandate**, he decided to cooperate with the new rulers of Syria, and, in November 1920, the French appointed him governor of the Damascus state, which they had created to administer southern Syria. He turned the office into a nest of nepotism and **corruption**, which scandalized **Damascene** public opinion. His inability to garner support from any quarter except from his extended **family** led the French to force him to resign in January 1923. Azm later formed the Reform Party to contest the elections of December 1931 to January 1932, and he gained a seat from Damascus. In June 1932, he became prime minister and signed France's first proposal for a **Franco-Syrian Treaty** in November 1933. Nationalist opposition to the treaty arose from its provision that the **Druze** and **Alawi** regions would remain separate from the rest of Syria. Azm's inability to deliver support for the treaty led the French high commissioner to dismiss him in March 1934.

AZM, KHALID AL- (1895–1965). A leading independent politician from the late 1940s until the early 1960s known as the "Red Pasha" for his alliance with the **Syrian Communist Party (SCP)** and support for better relations with the Soviet Union. Azm became prime minister to resolve a parliamentary crisis in December 1948, following Syria's defeat in the **Palestine War of 1948**. He was deposed by the March 1949 coup d'état of **Husni al-Za'im**, but after **Sami al-Hinnawi's** military coup in August, he became finance minister. In December 1949, after **Adib al-Shishakli** seized power, he named Azm prime minister, but his government fell after just five months because of feuding among cabinet members and disruption by **Akram al-Hawrani**. He returned as prime minister yet again in March 1951, this time with Hawrani's support, as well as that of the **National Party** and the Syrian

Army. The common denominator was opposition to the **People's Party**, which held a plurality in the National Assembly. Azm's tenure was once again brief, as his government was brought down when the People's Party inspired demonstrations at the end of July. Azm won renewed influence in the 1955 cabinet of **Sabri al-Asali** as its neutralist foreign minister. In this capacity, Azm cultivated good relations with the Soviet Union to fend off Western pressures exercised through **Iraq** and **Turkey**. His good relations with the Soviets were mirrored in Syrian politics by his close ties to **Khalid Bakdash**, the leader of the SCP.

After Syria's secession from the **United Arab Republic (UAR)**, Azm returned as prime minister again in September 1962, with a platform to restore democratic liberties that had been suspended under the UAR. In December, he rescinded the state of emergency and promised multiparty elections. This threat to curtail the army's role in politics generated a new round of plotting by several cliques of army officers, leading to the **March 8, 1963 Coup** that overthrew the Azm government. Azm departed Syria and spent his remaining years in **Lebanon**.

AZMA, BASHIR AL- (1910–1992). During the **secessionist regime**, Azma served as prime minister of the cabinet that formed after the 28 March 1962 military coup against a conservative civilian government. Azma was an independent politician who had been head of the Syrian Doctors' Association. His government moved to heal Syrian relations with **Egypt**, which had soured because of Syria's secession from the **United Arab Republic**. Nonetheless, Egypt continued to criticize the Syrian government, and at the end of July, the Syrians announced the discovery of a Nasserist plot to seize power. On the domestic front, the Azma government reversed some conservative measures by restoring the 1958 **land reform** law and renationalizing a number of large **banks**. Under strong political pressure to restore democratic liberties, he allowed the National Assembly to reconvene on 14 September and vote for a new government under **Khalid al-Azm**. Azma then became deputy prime minister, a position he held until the **March 8, 1963 coup**. *See also* SOCIALIST DECREES.

B

BAB SAGHIR. The old, walled portion of **Damascus** had seven ancient gates. Al-Bab al-Saghir, “the Little Gate,” is situated on the city’s southern flank and gives its name to a cemetery just outside the walls that contains the graves of many notable figures from early **Islamic** history. The cemetery is a destination for **Shi’i** Muslim pilgrims who wish to visit the tombs of the Prophet’s **family**. These include the sister of **Husayn ibn Ali**, Umm Kulthum; and Husayn’s two daughters, Sakina and Ruqayya. Two of the Prophet’s wives, Umm Salma and Umm Habiba, are buried there. Bab Saghir’s cemetery also contains the grave of the first muezzin (one who gives the public call to prayer), Bilal al-Habashi.

BAGHDAD PACT. **Great Britain** was the moving force behind this pro-Western military alliance formed by **Iraq** and **Turkey** on 24 February 1955. Much of the following year’s regional politics focused on the struggle to include Syria in the pact or keep it out. **Egypt** and **Saudi Arabia** supported Syrian parties and politicians who favored nonalignment. In Syrian politics, this episode was eventful in generating a coalition among hitherto rival groups, especially the **Ba’th Party** and the **Syrian Communist Party**, and between the Ba’th and Egypt, which supported the former’s determination to prevent Syria from joining the Baghdad Pact. In early March 1955, a Syrian–Egyptian–Saudi Arabian alliance was proposed as an alternative security arrangement (it remained a diplomatic and not a military fact), effectively scuttling the prospect of Syrian participation in the British plan. Britain nonetheless adhered to the Baghdad Pact in April. The episode marked Syria’s refusal to take sides in the Cold War by following a neutralist line. During the next three years, Syria’s neutralism strained its relations with Britain and the **United States**. Both powers increased pressures on the Syrian government. As a result, the Syrians improved relations with the Soviet Union, which offered economic, military, and political support.

BAKDASH, KHALID (1912–1995). Secretary of the **Syrian Communist Party (SCP)**. Born in **Damascus**, Bakdash was the durable leader of the SCP. He joined the party in 1930, while a student at the Damascus School of Law, where he met some **Armenian** communists. His own **Kurdish** background attracted many young educated Kurds to the party. In 1931, the **French** imprisoned Bakdash for several months for his political activities, and they arrested him again in 1933, but he escaped and traveled to the Soviet Union. Around this time, he produced the first Arabic translation of *The Communist Manifesto*. In the Soviet Union, he studied at the Communist University of the Toilers of the East until 1936, when he returned to Syria and became secretary-general of the SCP. The same year, Bakdash went to Paris to assist the Syrian delegation negotiating the **Franco–Syrian Treaty**. He was instrumental in obtaining the French Communist Party's support for the Syrians. He then directed the party to support the **National Bloc's** demands for independence. During **World War II**, Bakdash steered the SCP on a strictly nationalist line, delaying the class struggle until independence could be attained.

During the independence era, Bakdash defined the party's platform as opposition to imperialism, support for civil liberties, and helping the poor. He reached the peak of his influence between 1954 and 1958, when he forged a common front with the independent politician **Khalid al-Azm** and Ba`thist leader **Akram al-Hawrani**. In 1954, Bakdash won a seat in parliament, the first communist to be elected in an Arab country. He then benefited from Syria's turn to the Soviet Union for support against Western pressures to join an anticommunist alliance, but when Syria and **Egypt** formed the **United Arab Republic** in 1958, he concluded that the virulently anticommunist Egyptian president Gamal Abd al-Nasser would suppress the SCP, and he went into exile in Eastern Europe. Bakdash spent most of the next eight years in Prague, and then, in 1966, the **Neo-Ba`th** regime invited him to return. When **Hafiz al-Asad** came to power, he included the SCP in the National Progressive Front, a coalition of leftist parties headed by the **Ba`th Party**, but Bakdash's movements were closely circumscribed until his death in 1995.

BAKRI, NASIB AL- (1888–1966). Nationalist leader from **Damascus** active in **al-Fatat** during the **Ottoman** era and a participant in the **Arab Revolt**, in which his chief task was to organize a **Druze** rising against the Ottomans. During the course of those activities, Bakri developed a close association with Druze leader **Sultan al-Atrash**. Under **Amir Faysal's** 1918–1920 government, he was rewarded for his efforts against the Ottomans with a high post. During the **French Mandate** era, Bakri played a crucial role in the **Great Revolt** of 1925–1927 as a link between Damascus-based nationalists of the **People's Party** and Druze leaders. When the

French suppressed the revolt, he was forced into exile. He returned to Syria in 1928 and four years later resumed his nationalist activities by joining the **National Bloc** in return for its support for his election to parliament. In the factional politics of the Bloc, Bakri lined up with the moderate leader **Jamil Mardam**. When Mardam became prime minister in 1936, he appointed Bakri governor of **Jabal Druze** because of his extensive experience in the region. Yet, the appointment of a non-Druze rankled the Druze, especially those who opposed the incorporation of their region with the rest of Syria (from 1922 to 1936 Jabal Druze had administrative autonomy). To appease Druze sentiment, Prime Minister Mardam agreed to limit Bakri's tenure to six months. In 1938, Bakri left the Bloc, even though he was its vice president at the time, and switched over to its rival, **Abd al-Rahman Shahbandar**. In the independence era, Bakri belonged to the second People's Party and was elected to parliament in 1949.

BANIYAS. This modern port is at the site of an ancient Phoenician settlement lying between **Latakia** and **Tartus**. It is the terminal of an oil pipeline from **Iraq** and the site of an oil refinery that has operated since 1980. **Tourists** frequent the town because it is located near a **Crusader**-era castle, al-Marqab, and it is not far from the medieval Assassin stronghold at **Masyaf**. In May 2011, Baniyas was the site of an early effort by the Asad regime to quell the **Syrian Uprising**. After opposition forces gained control over some largely **Sunni** districts, government forces surrounded the city on 3 May and cut the phone lines. Four days later, government forces entered the city to regain control. **Human rights** groups claimed that **security forces** shot at protesters. While the government justified its repressive measures by claiming it was pursuing **Salafi** extremists, activists asserted that such allegations were regime propaganda.

BANIYAS RIVER. This modest stream rises from springs in the **Golan Heights** and flows into the Jordan River. It contributes roughly one-fifth of the water to its upper reaches (the other tributaries of the upper Jordan rise in **Lebanon** and **Israel**). Even though the Baniyas River is a small stream, it has political importance because it replenishes the Jordan River, one of Israel's main water sources. Between 1964 and 1966, Syria developed plans to divert its waters to the **Yarmuk River** to inflict economic damage on Israel in retaliation for Israel's encroachment on supposedly neutral territory in the **demilitarized zones**. When Syrian machinery began work on the diversion, Israel launched military strikes on work sites to block the effort. Clashes over this water diversion project contributed to the political crisis that resulted in the **June 1967 War**, when Israel conquered the Golan Heights. Since that time, Israel has controlled the waterway, and some Israelis argue that it

would be folly to return control over that water source to Syria as part of a peace settlement. Given the small quantity of water that the Baniyas contributes, however, that is not one of the major issues obstructing a settlement.

BANKING. During the **French Mandate**, Syria's banks were owned by Europeans, and the function of issuing **currency** resided in the privately held Bank of Syria and Lebanon. After independence, it took the government about 10 years to form a Central Bank to issue currency and supervise the private, mostly Arab, banking sector. During that period, the Agricultural Bank was the sole government bank from which Syrians could borrow. Private banks served short-term commercial needs at modest levels. Traditional forms of credit extended by landowners and moneylenders persisted in towns and villages, usually at extremely high interest rates. The weak financial infrastructure inhibited private investment in large-scale development projects with the important exception of financing pumps and tractors for the extension of cultivation in **Jazira**.

The financial sector got a huge jolt in 1961, when the **United Arab Republic** passed the **Socialist Decrees** nationalizing foreign-owned banks and partially nationalizing local banks. The **secessionist regime** reversed these measures, but the **Ba'th Party** regime renationalized all banks in May 1963. Syria had no private banks for the next 40 years.

The Central Bank handles money supply, and an assortment of state-owned banks issue credit for specific sectors of the **economy**. Thus, the Commercial Bank of Syria, the only bank authorized to manage foreign currency exchange, offers credit to **public-sector** companies. The Real Estate Bank finances the construction of hospitals, schools, and hotels. The People's Credit Bank arranges loans to the service sector. The Industrial Bank and the Agricultural Cooperative Bank support public-sector companies in their respective spheres.

An acute foreign exchange crisis in 1986 and endemic economic malaise caused the regime to phase in more leeway for certain private financial transactions so that in the early 1990s foreign banks could operate in seven designated free **trade** zones. Private Syrian firms could obtain foreign credit only if they were based in one of those zones. Restricted liberalization of banking yielded only modest results, and in a few years it was apparent that the state-run banking system was still obstructing economic growth and development. In addition to regulatory problems, the financial system suffered from technical obsolescence, for example, the small number of computers.

In early 2001, President **Bashar al-Asad's** cabinet approved private banks on condition of majority ownership by Syrians, but it did not create an independent regulatory agency to oversee private banks. In the early years of the Asad regime, there was minimal progress in modernizing the banking sector because entrenched political interests blocked substantial change.

Consequently, public-sector companies preserved their privileged access to capital at the expense of the private sector. Asad eventually adopted measures to modernize banking with a plan to implement managerial reforms and utilize innovative information technology. The Banking Sector Support Programme II, a **European Union** program, partnered with Syrian banks to implement reforms. In addition, mechanisms for financial monitoring were established to assist in supervising currency exchanges, and the Research and Statistics Directorate was established within the Central Bank of Syria. To improve the expertise of bank staff, the Bank Training Center was established in 2005.

In 2010, the government encouraged greater foreign investment by raising the ceiling on foreign shares from 49 to 60 percent, thereby allowing foreign entities to gain a controlling share while ensuring that Syrians would have a substantial stake in banks. To strengthen the various banking sectors, the government increased minimum capital requirements to \$200 million for commercial banks, \$300 million for **Islamic** banks, and \$435 million for investment banks, which first gained legal standing under Bashar al-Asad. With 14 private banks, 6 state-owned banks, and about 1.1 trillion Syrian pounds in bank deposits by 2010, the regime's modernization policies were gaining ground.

At the same time, however, Syrian banks suffered under international sanctions. The George W. Bush administration banned U.S. companies from working with the Commercial Bank of Syria. The Barack Obama administration expanded the scope of sanctions when it alleged that the bank provided financial services to North Korean and Syrian agencies implicated in the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The Obama administration's move was a response to the government crackdown during the **Syrian Uprising** designed to prevent European companies from doing business with the Commercial Bank of Syria. Given that European countries were the most significant consumers of Syrian oil, the Obama administration's new sanctions undermined the Asad regime's economic resources.

BARADA RIVER. Known in the Bible as the Abana, the Barada River rises from springs in the Anti-Lebanon Mountains and runs eastward until it descends to the plain of **Damascus**, which depends on its waters for urban and **agricultural** use. Quite simply, without this river, there would be no Damascus. Since ancient times, the Nabataeans, Aramaeans, Romans, and **Umayyads** have dug channels to distribute the river's waters over a broad area. By Roman times, six branches of the Barada had been artificially created to bring water to Damascus for use in public baths, fountains, and houses. After passing through Damascus, the branches extend into the surrounding **Ghuta** oasis, which is irrigated by them. Beyond the Ghuta, the river terminates in a marshy area east of Damascus.

BA'TH PARTY. *Ba'th* means “rebirth” or “renaissance.” The party’s full name from 1947 to 1953 was the Arab Renaissance Party; in 1953, it was renamed the Arab Socialist Renaissance Party. It was formally established by **Michel Aflaq** and **Salah al-Din al-Bitar** in 1947, and went on to become the most influential political party in Arab politics during the 1950s and 1960s, and the ruling party in Syria since 1963. Its platform stresses Arab unity, freedom, and socialism.

EARLY HISTORY. The cofounders were teachers at a secondary school in **Damascus** in the 1930s, when Syria was still under the **French Mandate**. In the early 1940s, Aflaq and Bitar resigned their teaching posts to pursue their political aspirations. Even before formally constituting the movement as a party, it attracted a following among their pupils, many of whom went on to become teachers who would in turn recruit their own pupils to the movement. The founding congress of the Ba'th Party was held in Damascus on 4–6 April 1947. True to its Pan-Arab ideology, the congress attracted members from **Iraq**, **Jordan**, and **Lebanon**, as well as various parts of Syria. Aflaq was elected secretary-general of the party, a title he retained as its chief ideologue until 1965.

IDEOLOGY. The Ba'th Party’s ideology is encapsulated in its slogan, “Unity, Freedom, and Socialism. One Arab nation with an eternal mission.” For Aflaq and Bitar, **Arab nationalism** was the underlying idea for all three elements of the slogan. They wanted to overcome the division of the Arab world into many states and achieve the unity of the Arab nation. Freedom for the various Arab countries under European rule and domination would be necessary to bring about unity. Then the united Arab nation would have to conquer its internal enemies, namely feudal and reactionary institutions, to clear the way for the establishment of a just social order. The socialist element in Ba'thist ideology remained secondary until the 1960s and the rise of a new generation of party activists opposed to Aflaq and Bitar.

STRUCTURE. The Second National Congress, held in June 1954, formally defined the party’s organizational structure to consist of a hierarchy of six units. The basic unit is the circle comprising between three and seven members. Above the circle is the division, which is made of three to seven circles. Two or more divisions comprise a section, the leadership of which is a congress that elects a section command. Above the section is a branch composed of two or more sections and usually encompassing a city or province. The second-highest unit is a region, which corresponds to an Arab country, so that Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, and Jordan would each have a Regional Congress and a Regional Command. The highest unit is the National Command, which oversees party activity in the various countries in which it is active.

HISTORY. The party entered the national political stage in 1949, when it won a single seat in national parliamentary elections. Under **Husni al-Za'im**, the Ba'th was suppressed, along with other political parties. During the brief

dictatorship of **Sami al-Hinnawi**, Aflaq served as minister of **education**. When **Adib al-Shishakli** seized power at the end of 1949, the party hoped that Syria's new ruler would give it space to win new support, but, by 1952, Shishakli was clearly unwilling to countenance organized political activity outside his control. The Ba'th's leaders then joined with the **National Party**, the **People's Party**, and the **Syrian Communist Party (SCP)** in 1953 to find a way to bring down the regime. Around the same time, Aflaq and Bitar joined forces with **Akram al-Hawrani's Arab Socialist Party** to form the Arab Socialist Renaissance Party. After Shishakli's overthrow, the Ba'th won 22 seats in the national parliamentary elections of September 1954, in large measure because of the popular base Hawrani added to the party with his following in **Jabal Druze**, **Hama**, and the Syrian Army. Hawrani, Bitar, and **Wahib al-Ghanim** all won seats. The Ba'th continued to grow in influence, and it established close ties with **Egypt** during the struggle against Syria's adherence to the **Baghdad Pact**. In 1955–1956, Hawrani's faction formed a tactical alliance with the SCP to oppose pro-Western political forces seeking union with Iraq or alignment with the **United States**. Aflaq and Bitar, however, became alarmed at the SCP's increasing popularity, which it owed, in part, to the growth of military and economic support from communist countries. In June 1956, the Ba'th gained the foreign relations portfolio for Bitar. In late 1957 and early 1958, the party played a key role in the political developments that led to union with Egypt.

When the **United Arab Republic (UAR)** formed in February 1958, the Ba'th leadership was optimistic regarding the opportunity the union would present them to dominate Syrian affairs, even though Gamal Abd al-Nasser insisted on the party's dissolution as a condition for forming the union. But Nasser's handling of the July 1959 elections to a National Union, wherein he obstructed Ba'th members from getting elected, alienated party leaders from the union experiment. At the end of the year, the UAR's Ba'thist ministers resigned from the government. Because the party voluntarily dissolved itself at the outset of the union, the Syrian Ba'th entered a period of disarray that permanently weakened the party's original leadership. Moreover, younger party members blamed Aflaq, Bitar, and Hawrani for leading Syria into the union, which had been a disaster for the party. Some of these critics secretly continued party activities and kept its structures intact in a number of towns. When Syria seceded from the UAR in September 1961, the reconstituted Ba'th was dominated by younger men referred to as "regionalists" for their greater interest in pursuing socialism at home than unity with other Arab countries. Another development that weakened the old leadership was the emergence of the secret **Military Committee** as a powerful organization. In 1962, it was evident that Aflaq's star had dimmed in the Ba'thist firmament and that Bitar no longer enjoyed the respect of the rank and file. Hawrani left the party and revived his own Arab Socialist Party.

Eighteen months after the failure of the UAR, a coalition of Ba`thist, Nasserist, and independent officers seized power in the **March 8, 1963 Coup**. Strong sentiment for Nasser in the army and society at large, however, meant that the Ba`th's position was not yet secure. So in April, the Military Committee ordered a purge of Nasserists from the army. Then, pro-Nasser riots broke out in Damascus and **Aleppo**, which the regime harshly suppressed and followed with further purges of Nasserists from the bureaucracy. The decisive moment in the Ba`thist–Nasserist struggle occurred on 18 July 1963, when a Nasserist uprising of officers and civilians in Damascus was bloodily repressed by Ba`thist forces. These events further poisoned relations between Egypt and Syria.

Meanwhile, the party's internal divisions became more severe. On the one hand, the original leadership of Aflaq and Bitar gave priority to Arab unity. They were opposed, however, by younger members who tended to come from the provinces and favored rapid implementation of the party's socialist platform. The younger Ba`thists, later dubbed the **Neo-Ba`th**, eventually sided with the Military Committee against the Aflaq–Bitar wing of the party. The radical faction took control of the Regional Command in September 1963, when it excluded Aflaq from its membership.

In addition to strife within the party, the regime faced strong opposition from conservative social forces. Preachers in mosques began to condemn the Ba`th for its socialism and secularism. In early 1964, violent clashes erupted in Aleppo, Hama, and **Homs**. In Hama, an antigovernment rising broke out in April under the slogan "**Islam** or the Ba`th," and the **Muslim Brotherhood** organized armed attacks on government and party officials. In retaliation, the regime sent tanks into the city and shelled it into submission. To quell the unrest, General **Amin al-Hafiz** issued a new **constitution** under which he became president and Bitar the prime minister. But in October, Hafiz dismissed Bitar, assumed the office of prime minister himself, and appointed members of the Ba`thist left to the cabinet. The regime then embarked on a more radical phase of **economic reforms**. In December 1964, it banned all oil concessions, effectively nationalizing the Syrian oil **industry**, and, on 1 January 1965, it enacted sweeping nationalization measures targeting industry, including electricity, cotton ginning, and most foreign **trade**. The Regional Command, dominated by the Military Committee and the regionalists, then concentrated power in its hands in March 1965, when it assumed full powers and designated its secretary-general as head of state. Two months later, Aflaq was ousted as secretary-general of the National Command. Aflaq and Bitar tried to reassert their leadership in November but could not dislodge their rivals from the Regional Command. In February 1966, the remaining representatives of the old guard in the National Command fired the members of the Regional Command and dismissed members of the Military Committee from the **National Revolutionary Command**

Council. Then, in the **February 23, 1966 Coup**, the regionalists and the Military Committee took the decisive steps to remove their rivals, thus permanently dividing the party between the old guard (whose supporters would come to power in Iraq two years later) and the Neo-Ba`th. Since then, relations between the two wings of the formerly single party have been marked by venomous propaganda and subversion. The party founders, Aflaq and Bitar, fled to Beirut.

During the period of Neo-Ba`thist rule, from 1966 to 1970, the party evolved distinct civilian and military wings loyal to **Salah al-Jadid** and **Hafiz al-Asad**, respectively. After the **June 1967 War**, tensions mounted between the two wings regarding domestic and **foreign policy**, and, in November 1970, Asad overthrew the civilian branch in the **Corrective Movement**. Asad initially took steps to increase party membership and broaden the base of his regime beyond the Ba`th Party, but during the Islamic insurgency of 1978 to 1982, he fell back on the party for support. Membership grew from around 65,000 in 1971 to more than 1 million in the early 1990s. Such expansion entailed the dilution of the party's ideological character and reinforced its role as a mechanism for allocating patronage (jobs, licenses, and favors). An expanded membership also made the Ba`th an organ for spying on citizens by placing party members in government offices, **public-sector** companies, schools, and universities. Another fundamental change under Asad was in the procedure for electing party leaders. These elections had formerly expressed the wishes of party members, but under Asad the Regional Command appointed leaders to lower-level party organs. This helped turn the party into yet another mechanism for sustaining a personality cult surrounding President Asad.

The government's turn to gradual **economic reform** in the late 1980s threatened the Ba`th Party's socialist plank. Another symptom of the party's diminished power was Asad's decision to allot a larger proportion of seats (87 out of 250) in the People's Assembly to independent deputies since 1990. Fifteen years would pass after the general party congress of 1985 before the next congress was held in June 2000, as part of Asad's carefully executed transition of power to his son **Bashar al-Asad**. The president died just one week before the congress was to open. It elected Bashar to the Regional Command and nominated him as the only candidate for the presidency, a selection ratified in a national referendum. In other business, the congress passed bland resolutions affirming the policy of economic reform and administrative revamping. There were no major changes in the party leadership. The impression of stability, and even stagnation, however, was challenged in the spring of 2003, 40 years after the Ba`th Party came to power in Syria. The U.S. invasion of Iraq deposed that country's Ba`thist regime, and several

outspoken American pundits called for the overthrow of the party in Syria as well, but political and military constraints prevented U.S. military action against the Syrian regime from materializing.

In 2005, the Tenth Regional Congress of the Syrian Ba`th Party was held, and while many hoped it would be used to promote economic, social, and political reforms, the congress was widely viewed as a medium for President Asad to consolidate power. He spoke of the dangers posed by the diffusion of digital technology, which appeared to be a complete reversal from his stance on information technology in prior years. Party members broke with the socialist heritage of the Ba`th when they advocated the establishment of a social market **economy**, a mix of free enterprise and robust government regulation. The congress recommended reforms in several other areas, including creating a media council to expand the freedom of the press, establishing a program to include **women** in decision-making, eliminating some of the **Emergency Law** dating to 1963, and reviewing the situation of stateless **Kurds**. The congress also indicated that the party would be more amenable to legalizing other political parties. At the same time, however, it maintained that political parties based on religious, sectarian, or ethnic platforms would not be allowed. Most importantly, the internal composition of the Ba`th Party leadership changed: President Asad filled the party's ruling council with his supporters and reduced the membership of the Regional Command Council from 21 to 14. These moves seemed to be attempts by Asad to consolidate power in accord with his reshuffling the leadership of the **security forces** a few weeks later.

In the early stages of the **Syrian Uprising**, 200 members left the party due to the regime's brutality against protesters. Under pressure to act, the party enacted political reforms, including an end to the 1963 state of emergency and the legalization of other political parties. A clause in Article 8 of the constitution describing the Ba`th Party as the "leader of state and society" was dropped. Yet, there remained restrictions on forming political parties. The first multiparty election in 50 years was held on 7 May 2012, but despite the presence of new political parties, the Ba`th Party held on to power, securing a majority of the parliament.

BATTLE OF AJNADAYN. *See* AJNADAYN, BATTLE OF.

BATTLE OF AYN JALUT. *See* AYN JALUT, BATTLE OF.

BATTLE OF HOMS. *See* HOMS, BATTLE OF.

BATTLE OF MAYSALUN. *See* MAYSALUN, BATTLE OF.

BATTLE OF YARMUK. *See* YARMUK, BATTLE OF.

BAYANUNI, ALI AL- (1938–). Head of the Syrian **Muslim Brotherhood** from 1996 to 2010. Bayanuni was named deputy director of the Syrian branch in 1977, two years before he was forced to relocate to **Jordan** during the period of intensifying clashes between the government and the Muslim Brotherhood. In 2000, the political exile moved to London, where he cultivated political and religious contacts that made him a significant figure in the opposition in exile. In 2005, Bayanuni attempted to join forces with former vice president **Abd al-Halim al-Khaddam** to uproot President **Bashar al-Asad** and what the Muslim Brotherhood characterized as an **Alawi** regime. The initiative was dubious at best, and it failed after three years of forced reconciliation between the two leaders. During the **Syrian Uprising**, Bayanuni threw his support behind protesters, accusing the regime of committing acts of genocide and urging civilians to rise up against a tyrannical government.

BAYBARS, SULTAN (1223–1277). The second **Mamluk** ruler and founder of the Mamluk sultanate's authority over Syria. Baybars first appeared as a dependent of a late **Ayyubid** sultan, and he was probably behind the murder of the last Ayyubid ruler in 1250. A decade later, after playing an important part in the Mamluk defeat of the **Mongols** at the **Battle of Ayn Jalut**, he plotted and partook in the assassination of the first Mamluk sultan, Qutuz, to seize power. He then made thorough preparations for warfare in Syria against the **Crusader** states and the Mongols. Between 1260 and 1265, Baybars eliminated and absorbed the remaining Ayyubid principalities scattered throughout Syria. He then launched a six-year war against the Crusaders' strongholds, beginning in **Palestine**, moving north to Antioch, and finally taking Safita and **Hisn al-Akrad**. When Baybars died in **Damascus** in 1277, he had set the Mamluk sultanate on a firm military foundation and reunified most of Syria under a single authority that would last until the **Ottoman** conquest in 1516. His mausoleum in al-Zahiriyya **madrassa** became the site of Syria's first national library in 1879.

BEDOUIN. Throughout the history of Syria, the countryside of the interior has been strongly influenced, and at times completely dominated, by the Bedouin, pastoral nomads belonging to various tribes. The Bedouins' livelihood depended on pasturing their sheep and camel herds. The pursuit of grazing lands determined the pattern of annual migration between winter domains in the desert of the east and south and summer pastures closer to and sometimes in the western and northern regions of rain-fed **agriculture**. At times of drought or government weakness, the Bedouin completely took over

lands that were marginally suited to cultivation. Alternatively, the zone of cultivation pushed eastward during periods of strong sedentary authority. For centuries, the Bedouin occupied a special niche in Syrian **trade**. They exchanged the products of their livestock (wool, hides, meat, and dairy products) for grain and manufactures, and they provided the animals that transported goods in overland trade.

In modern times, the **Ottoman Empire** took measures to contain the Bedouin during the second half of the 19th century, in the **Tanzimat** era. The Ottomans stationed larger and better-equipped military forces; built permanent garrisons and government offices at strategic points on the **Euphrates River**, for example, **al-Raqqa** and **Dayr al-Zur**; induced cultivators to colonize deserted villages; and enticed Bedouin sheikhs to cooperate by giving them property rights to tribal lands. By the early 20th century, the balance of power had shifted against the Bedouin, and relations within tribes altered. The sheikhs were becoming landlords over immigrant sharecroppers from other parts of Syria and fellow tribesmen who had given up pastoral nomadism.

The Bedouins' numbers declined in the 20th century as they became increasingly sedentary. In 1930, the Bedouin numbered 360,000, or nearly 13 percent of the total population. Thirty years later, their numbers had dwindled to just more than 210,000, or 5 percent of the total population. Most tribesmen have left the pastoral **economy** for agriculture; some have migrated to towns and cities to work in construction and transport; and a small portion still raise livestock but no longer follow the old migratory patterns, preferring to use trucks to transport their animals and bring them food and water.

BEIRUT–DAMASCUS DECLARATION. A petition aimed at normalizing relations between Syria and **Lebanon** published on 12 May 2006, and signed by roughly 500 Lebanese and Syrian activists and intellectuals. The statement called for demarcating the Syrian–Lebanese border and demanded an end to political killings in Lebanon, believed to be perpetrated by pro-Syrian members of **Hizballah**. The declaration was intended to seek an end to Syrian interference in Lebanon and force government officials to maintain a higher level of respect for Lebanese sovereignty and independence. Most of the Syrian signatories were fired from their jobs and harassed by security officials for participating in antigovernment activity. Several were arrested and convicted for undermining national unity and stoking sectarian conflict.

BIMARISTAN. A Persian word meaning “a place for the sick,” it is the term for hospitals in early **Islamic** times. **Abbasid** rulers in Baghdad supported the earlier **Iranian** tradition of royal patronage for medical **education**

and treatment at hospitals. Sultan **Nur al-Din Mahmud** brought the bimari-stan to Syria in the mid-12th century, ordering their construction in **Damascus**, **Aleppo**, and **al-Raqqa**. Descriptions of medieval hospitals indicate that their functions included treating both physical and mental illness, teaching, and providing shelter for ailing indigent townsmen.

BITAR, SALAH AL-DIN AL- (1912–1980). Cofounder of the **Ba'th Party**, along with **Michel Aflaq**. Bitar was a **Sunni** Muslim from **Damascus**. He studied political science at the Sorbonne in Paris, and then returned to Damascus to teach high school. In cooperating with Aflaq, he actively engaged in politics, while Aflaq played the role of party ideologue and writer. From 1947 to 1954, Bitar was on the Ba'th Party's Executive Committee, and when the party reorganized its structure, he became a member of its National Command. In 1954, he gained a seat in parliament after two earlier unsuccessful attempts. He became foreign minister in 1956 and used that office to campaign for the Ba'th Party's platform of Arab unity. In early 1958, Bitar headed a government committee to push forward efforts for union with **Egypt**. When the **United Arab Republic (UAR)** was formed, he served on its cabinets until the end of 1959, when his disillusionment with the union experiment led him to resign from office. As a condition of joining the UAR regime, he had already withdrawn from the Ba'th Party's National Command. By 1960, Bitar was strongly opposed to the union with Egypt that he had so vigorously pursued, and when Syria seceded in September 1961, he publicly lauded the act.

At the beginning of the first Ba'thist regime in March 1963, Bitar served as prime minister a number of times, but he was pushed aside when more radical factions of the party rose to dominance. After the **February 23, 1966 Coup**, the **Neo-Ba'th** leaders imprisoned Bitar, but he escaped in August and fled across the border to **Lebanon**. When the **Lebanese Civil War** erupted in 1975, Bitar moved to **France**, where he remained active in publishing and commenting on Arab affairs. In particular, he expressed his regret at the failure of his and Aflaq's political enterprise. **Hafiz al-Asad's** regime suspected Bitar of plotting against it, and, on 21 July 1980, he was assassinated in Paris by Syrian agents.

BIZRI, AFIF AL- (1914–1994). First rose to prominence as head of the court-martial that tried officers implicated in the **Conspiracy of 1956**, orchestrated by **Iraq** and **Great Britain**. The following year, Bizri joined forces with **Abd al-Hamid al-Sarraj** to form the Revolutionary Command Council, an extragovernmental body under leftist officers that went on to dominate Syria's **foreign policy**. In August 1957, Major General Bizri, by then known for his sympathies with the **Syrian Communist Party (SCP)**,

became chief of staff as part of a leftist purge of pro-Western officers. He played a leading role in pushing for the union with **Egypt**, which created the **United Arab Republic (UAR)** in February 1958, but Egyptian president Gamal Abd al-Nasser dismissed him just one month after the union for objecting to purges of the Syrian officer corps.

In June 1959, Bizri left Syria and settled in Beirut. He issued a public manifesto criticizing Egyptian domination of the UAR and calling for the restoration of political liberties. He favored retaining the union but modifying its form by moving to a federal system in which Syria and Egypt would each have separate parliaments while continuing to handle defense and foreign relations under a central government. Nasser interpreted Bizri's statement as a summons to agitation by communists in Syria, so he ordered a crackdown on the SCP. Unlike most army officers who took active roles in politics, Bizri was serious about ideological issues, and, in the mid-1960s, he contributed to debates among reformist communists who broke away from the SCP.

BLUDAN CONFERENCE. In September 1937, **Arab nationalists** from several countries met to express broad support for the **Palestinians'** revolt against Zionism and the British Mandate in general, and against **Great Britain's** recent proposal to partition **Palestine** into Jewish and Arab states. The Bludan Conference is historically noteworthy as an early demonstration of Pan-Arab concern regarding Palestine.

BONAPARTE, NAPOLEON (1769–1821). Napoleon's relevance to Syrian history stems from the **French** invasion of **Egypt**, which he led in July 1798. To secure his position there, he led an expedition to Syria in February 1799. His 13,000-man army overcame **Ottoman** garrisons at al-Arish in the Sinai Peninsula and at Gaza in southern **Palestine**. In March, the French force proceeded toward Acre, the well-fortified stronghold of **Ahmad Pasha al-Jazzar**. Napoleon planned a land and marine blockade to besiege Acre, but a squadron of Ottoman and British ships intercepted French naval forces off the coast of Acre and drove them off. Meanwhile, Ahmad al-Jazzar prepared Acre to withstand a siege, and England assisted him with military supplies. The siege began in the middle of March. Ottoman forces tenaciously defended the town, while the governor of **Damascus** dispatched forces to attack the French from the rear, but the French repulsed them near Nazareth. The siege dragged on for two months, and Napoleon was losing troops to bubonic plague, so, on 20 May, he broke the siege and began a retreat to Egypt. Some 2,000 French soldiers perished during the siege, half of them from the plague.

BRAZIL. President **Bashar al-Asad** visited Brazil as part of his 2010 Latin American tour. In 2009, Deputy Foreign Minister Faysal al-Mikdad had paved the way by meeting with the head of the Arab–Brazilian Chamber of Commerce to discuss cooperation between the two countries in **tourism**, cross-cultural initiatives, and business. When Asad came to Brazil, he met with President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva and he signed several economic agreements aimed at boosting bilateral **trade**, tourism, and scientific research. He also met with Syrian expatriates to applaud the significant role their community had played throughout the construction of hospitals and social service networks.

Brazil was one of a handful of countries that supported Asad when the **Syrian Uprising** broke out. On 10 June 2011, Brazilian foreign minister Antonio Patriota abstained from voting on a **United Nations (UN)** Security Council resolution that would condemn President Asad’s violent treatment of protesters. Brazilian representatives argued that such a UN Security Council denunciation would aggravate tensions in the region and distance Syria from diplomatic initiatives aimed at resolving the crisis. On 20 July, Patriota expressed full support for the reform measures announced by the Asad regime and discussed future prospects for bilateral collaboration. The Brazilian foreign minister, along with government officials from **India** and South Africa, dispatched a tripartite delegation to **Damascus** in early August in an attempt to gather additional information on Syrian events and communicate support for reforms. *See also* FOREIGN POLICY.

BUNNI, ANWAR AL- (1959–). A Syrian dissident from **Hama**. Bunni is a founding member of the Syrian Human Rights Association and the Freedom Center for the Defense of Journalists and Journalism in Syria. The activist became known for criticizing the regime’s oppressive policies and organizing such institutions as a center for **human rights** training with funding from the **European Union** and a Belgian nongovernmental organization. In 2006, he received a five-year prison sentence for participating in the **Beirut–Damascus Declaration**, aimed at normalizing relations between Syria and **Lebanon**. Following his sentencing, Bunni’s **family** members were harassed and threatened by **security forces** for several years. While in prison, Bunni continued to play an active role in the advancement of human rights throughout the Middle East. After being released in May 2011, he returned to his profession in law and represented protesters and fellow dissidents in court. He has published numerous papers and articles advocating reforms in the country’s political system.

BYZANTINE EMPIRE. In 324, the Roman emperor Constantine moved the imperial court from Rome to Byzantium, the site of present-day Istanbul in **Turkey**, known for centuries after the emperor as Constantinople. Also known as the Eastern Roman Empire, the Byzantine Empire represented a continuation of Roman rule over Syria and lasted until the Arab conquest in the 630s. Thereafter, the empire remained the nemesis of Muslim Syria until the 12th century and the era of the **Crusades**. In **Umayyad** and early **Abbasid** times, Muslim armies launched annual raids against the Byzantines along the Syrian–Asia Minor front. The Umayyads made a number of unsuccessful attempts to conquer the Byzantine capital, Constantinople. By the time the Abbasids rose to power in 750, the military frontier between the Arabs and Byzantines had stabilized in southeast Asia Minor. A number of energetic rulers revived the empire’s military power toward the end of the 10th century and led campaigns into northern Syria. They recovered Antioch and forced the **Hamdanid** and **Mirdasid** dynasties based in **Aleppo** to pay tribute. Further expansion southward was blocked by the ascendant **Fatimid dynasty**, with its center in **Egypt** and domains in southern Syria. Byzantine power in eastern Asia Minor received a stunning blow in 1071, when the **Saljuks** defeated them at the Battle of Manzikert. Byzantine appeals to **Christian** Europe for military support against the Muslims contributed to the launching of the First Crusade. The Crusaders posed a grave military threat to Muslim Syria, but they did not strengthen the position of the Byzantines in Asia Minor. Instead, their power steadily dwindled as wave after wave of Turkish tribesmen made their way westward during the 12th and 13th centuries, fundamentally altering the demography of Asia Minor and ending its role as a launching pad for Christian offensives against Syria.

C

CALIPHATE. After the death of Muhammad, the Prophet of **Islam**, Muslims created this institution to represent the continuation of his political and spiritual authority. The first four caliphs, Abu Bakr (632–634), Umar (634–644), Uthman (644–656), and Ali (656–661), are known as the Rightly Guided Caliphs, and they governed the growing Arab empire from the Arabian town of Medina, located in present-day **Saudi Arabia**. Following the assassination of Ali, **Mu'awiya** established the **Umayyad** caliphate with **Damascus** as the capital. The Umayyad dynasty lasted until 750, when it was replaced by the **Abbasid** caliphate, which moved the imperial center to **Iraq** and built a new city, Baghdad, to serve as the capital. The Abbasid caliphate represented the pinnacle of Islamic political and cultural achievement during the 8th and 9th centuries. By the middle of the 10th century, however, the caliphate had ceased to wield effective authority beyond the confines of Iraq. Syria had already fallen under the control of local forces and dynasties based in **Egypt**, including the **Fatimid dynasty**, which put forth a competing claim to the caliphate. With the fall of the Abbasid dynasty to **Mongol** invaders in 1258, the institution ceased to have any real political power, although the **Mamluk sultanate** and later the **Ottoman Empire** sustained a “shadow” caliphate until its final abolition by the Republic of **Turkey** in 1924.

CATHOLIC. A latecomer to Syrian Christianity, the Roman Catholic Church established a foothold during the 17th century, when the Jesuits began a proselytizing mission, not to convert Muslims to Christianity, but to bring eastern **Christians** into the fold of Catholicism. Jesuit and Capuchin priests went to **Aleppo** in 1626, and members of the Carmelite order followed. These efforts bore fruit during the 17th and 18th centuries, when the **Chaldaean** Church broke from the **Nestorian** Church, the **Greek Catholics** from the **Greek Orthodox**, **Syrian Catholics** from the **Syrian Orthodox** (or Jacobite), and the **Armenian Catholics** from the **Armenian Orthodox**. An important incentive for conversion had little to do with theology and everything to do with mundane matters, for **France** was the primary European sponsor of Catholic efforts and had extensive economic and diplomatic influ-

ence in the **Ottoman Empire**. Apart from missionaries, French merchants and consuls encouraged eastern Christians to become Catholic with promises of economic benefits and protection from Christian piracy. The strong European commercial presence in Aleppo during the 18th century provided a bridge for Catholic missions, whose activities increased the city's Catholic population from 4,000 in 1700 to nearly 15,000 by 1850. The eastern churches' hierarchies regarded the Catholics as interlopers and adopted a hostile attitude toward Rome and the various **Uniate** churches. In the late 1990s, the Catholics of various rites (Armenian, Chaldaean, Latin, Maronite, Syrian, and Greek) numbered just more than 300,000, of whom nearly two-thirds were Greek Catholics. That figure has changed little in recent years.

CEDAR REVOLUTION. The popular uprising also known as the Independence Intifada that swept **Lebanon** in February and March 2005 in the aftermath of **Rafiq al-Hariri's assassination** and helped bring about the end of Syria's military presence, which dated to 1976. Two days after Hariri's killing on 14 February, 150,000 Lebanese accompanied his funeral procession calling for the removal of Syrian troops from the country. **Hizballah** organized counterdemonstrations to back the Asad regime. The pro-Syrian rallies were dwarfed by the turnout demanding an end to Syrian interference.

On 14 March, more than 1 million people attended a demonstration in Beirut and marched from St. George Hotel to Martyrs' Square. The crowd called for a Syrian pullout and the resignation of the pro-Syrian cabinet. Under intense popular pressure, the cabinet resigned, and Syrian president **Bashar al-Asad** announced his intention to withdraw troops from the country. One of the long-term effects of the Cedar Revolution was the formation of the March 14 Alliance, a coalition of political parties and independent politicians opposed to Syrian influence in Lebanese affairs.

CENSORSHIP. Since the introduction of print media during the late **Ottoman** era, government authorities have regularly limited freedom of expression. Sultan **Abdulhamid II** instituted strict guidelines for imperial censors to prevent the publication of words and phrases alluding to liberal ideas. The 1908 constitutional restoration inaugurated a spell of journalistic exuberance marked by a proliferation of periodicals and lifting of censorship. The imposition of martial law during **World War I** reintroduced strict censorship. During the **French Mandate** period, the propagation of nationalist political views frequently resulted in the closure of publications and the arrest of writers.

After independence, government agencies to implement censorship developed during periods of military rule. The **United Arab Republic** created a special body committed to this function in the newly established Ministry of

Culture and Information. Under the **Ba`th Party** regime, Article 4b of the **Emergency Law** gave the government the authority to censor all forms of expression—print, electronic, and visual—on grounds of protecting national security.

The Ba`thist regime did not apply censorship evenly to all forms of expression or even consistently to the closely regulated official press. The absence of clear, specific guidelines meant that writers for official **news-papers** could get in trouble by unintentionally violating taboos that apparently existed in the minds of the regime's most powerful figures, but not on paper. A heavy hand also fell on books that dealt with politics and **religion**. Such works had to secure the approval of censors in a special bureau of the Ba`th Party. In such literary fields of creative writing as fiction, drama, and poetry, authors submitted manuscripts to censors from either the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Information, or the Arab Writers' Union (controlled by the Ba`th Party). As long as creative writers avoided direct criticism of the regime, they could, and frequently did, address urgent political, social, and cultural issues by treating them in historical settings or through symbolic messages.

As for broadcast media, the Ministry of Information operated all **radio and television** programs. This meant that before the spread of satellite dishes, Syrian television viewers in most of the country would watch official news reports, serial dramas, movies, sports events, and documentaries on the regime's economic and social achievements. Syrians living near **Jordan, Lebanon, or Turkey** could view television broadcasts from neighboring countries for a greater variety of programs. Another way to mitigate the effects of censorship was to tune in to foreign radio broadcasts, especially the British Broadcasting Corporation Arabic service and Radio Monte Carlo. While Syria's censorship regime was not completely effective in preventing the spread of critical ideas, it did severely constrict their circulation, and the fear of harsh punishment induced self-censorship. When the **Internet** came to the Middle East, the government blocked sites, monitored Internet usage and activity, and arrested individuals who expressed dissident views online.

In response to the **Syrian Uprising**, the government and regime supporters have vigorously attempted to censor the media to prevent news of atrocities from reaching the Syrian people and other countries. Most notably, the government disabled all Internet service in Syria in early June 2011, the same day massive opposition protests were scheduled to take place. The Committee to Protect Journalists alleged that the regime was imposing a news blackout by regulating local news reports and denying entry to foreign journalists. The deaths of Marie Colvin, a journalist for the *Sunday Times*, and Remi Ochlik, a **French** photographer, led to allegations that the Syrian Army was targeting journalists. Other French journalists and CNN staff alleged that the press center in **Homs** had been targeted by the Syrian Army.

CHALDAEAN. **Uniate** branch of the ancient **Nestorian** church established in 1672. Its patriarch resides in Baghdad. About 15,000 Chaldaeans live in **Jazira** and **Aleppo**, but most of them are in **Iraq**.

CHINA. The emergence of China as a global economic power in the 1990s boosted its significance in the Middle East, not only as a **trade** and investment partner, but as a voice in regional diplomacy. The timing of elevation of China's global stature roughly coincided with **Bashar al-Asad's** succession to the presidency in 2000. He made the first trip by a Syrian president to China in 2004, to meet with Chinese president Hu Jintao, Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing, and Premier Wen Jiabao. The move was partially in response to Syria's diplomatic isolation by Western states, forcing **Damascus** to look to the east for investment opportunities and political support. During the four-day visit, President Asad and President Hu expressed full support for a comprehensive solution to the Arab-**Israeli** conflict. Chinese officials stressed the importance of creating a resolution based on international legitimacy and a land-for-peace formula that would return the **Golan Heights** to Syrian jurisdiction. Foreign Minister Li condemned sanctions against Damascus imposed by the **United States** and **European Union** and urged the adoption of a strategy of resolving disputes through negotiation. Both leaders declared the visit a success and expressed renewed cooperation in political, economic, cultural, and **tourist** domains.

During his visit, Asad signed nine agreements aimed at expanding economic cooperation between the two nations. Trade with China became extremely profitable for Damascus in terms of imports and government revenue. Despite a controversy regarding dumping by Chinese companies that were accused of flooding Syrian markets with cheap goods, trade between the two countries reached \$2.1 billion in 2009. Beijing got involved in Syria's **energy** sector, with several Chinese companies investing in oil and gas fields. In 2008, Sinopec purchased fields from Canada's Tanganyika Oil Company in one of Syria's largest private-sector transactions to date. In June 2009, the Hong Kong-based company Gatoson announced a joint business venture that would construct a seven-kilometer-long **industrial** zone near **Hama** to attract industrial enterprises from Beijing.

In the years after Asad's visit to Beijing, several more high-level diplomatic exchanges took place. In 2006, Syrian foreign minister **Walid al-Mu'allim** paid an official visit to Beijing to discuss measures for enhancing bilateral cooperation. Mu'allim also participated in the second ministerial meeting of the Arab-Chinese Cooperation Forum, aimed at expanding diplomatic and economic ties. During a meeting with Premier Jiabao, both men expressed a desire to boost trade and coordinate additional joint business ventures among Chinese and Syrian industrialists. The Syrian minister also

met with his Chinese counterpart Li Chau Ching at the Foreign Ministry Headquarters to discuss regional problems, including the Arab–Israeli conflict, the Golan Heights, and **Iraq**.

In September 2009, Syrian minister of economy and trade, Lamya Asi, arrived in China to attend the International Trade and Investment Fair. Asi also participated in the first China–Arab States Economic and Trade Forum, aimed at boosting economic cooperation between Damascus and Beijing. Given the prominence of the Middle East in energy, China was seeking new opportunities to get involved in that sector. In November 2009, Chinese deputy prime minister Hua Liang, accompanied by General Xu Caihou, visited Damascus to discuss bilateral relations and economic cooperation. Hua met with Syrian deputy prime minister for economic affairs Abdallah al-Dardari and signed two economic agreements to expand technological cooperation between the two states. *See also* FOREIGN POLICY.

CHRISTIANS. Christians comprise about 10 percent of the population and live throughout the country. When the Muslim Arabs conquered Syria in the 7th century, most of the population was Christian and would remain so for several centuries. Although historians have not been able to determine with precision the pace of conversion to **Islam**, it appears that Christians became a **minority** no later than the 13th century. Their status under Muslim dominion was that of a protected minority, or *dhimmi*, that was liable to pay a special tax and was excluded from political office but otherwise exercised religious and communal freedoms. Anti-Christian persecution erupted periodically, the best-known examples occurring in the **Fatimid** and **Mamluk** eras, when **Byzantine** and **Crusader** military threats inflamed communal passions, but generally speaking, Christians in medieval and early modern Syria did not suffer harsh treatment or pressure to convert.

Their status began to change, however, in the 18th century, with the growth of commerce with Europe, a **trade** from which Christians benefited as cultural brokers. Then, in the 19th century, the **Ottoman** reform program, or **Tanzimat**, further improved Christians' standing by declaring legal equality for all subjects regardless of religion. Many Muslims then resented Christians' economic prosperity and believed that the Ottomans were favoring the Christians to placate the Europeans. A violent Muslim backlash exploded in the **Aleppo Massacre of 1850** and the **July 1860 Damascus Massacre**. Although these events struck terror into Syrian Christians, their communities did not suffer any further attacks, and they continued to prosper well into the 20th century because of their European contacts. Since the late **French Mandate** era, Syrian Christians, particularly the **Greek Orthodox**, have played a significant role in **Arab nationalist** movements. Moreover, the status of Christians has continued to improve with the gradual secularization of law and society.

There are eight historical denominations. The three Orthodox churches are the **Greek Orthodox**, whose liturgy is in Greek and Arabic; the **Syrian Orthodox**, or Jacobite, whose liturgy is in Syriac; and the **Armenian Orthodox**, or Gregorian, whose liturgy is in Armenian. The five **Uniate** churches are in communion with Rome but retain their own liturgies. The Uniate groups are the Maronites (entered into union with Rome in 1180), the **Syrian Catholics** (former Syrian Orthodox, established in 1783), the **Greek Catholics** (former Greek Orthodox, established in 1724), the **Chaldaean Catholics** (former **Nestorians** who became Uniates beginning in 1672), and the **Armenian Catholics** (former Armenian Orthodox, established in 1742). The Nestorians, or East Syrian Christian Church, have a Syriac liturgy and are separate from the Uniate and Orthodox churches. The distribution of different Christian denominations shows a preponderance of Greek Orthodox and a much smaller number of Greek Catholics along the coast, in the **Orontes River Valley**, around **Damascus**, and in the **Hawran**. The Syrian interior, beginning with **Homs** and **Hama**, then extending north toward **Aleppo** and north-eastward into **Jazira**, is the domain of Jacobite, Armenian, and Nestorian Christians.

During the **Syrian Uprising**, Christians have tended to support the government or adopt a neutral position. Many preferred the secular **Ba`th Party** regime to the prospect of Islamist rule. Their fears were accentuated by the fate of Christians in neighboring **Iraq**, where, after the fall of Baghdad's Ba`thist regime, Islamist extremists bombed churches and purged neighborhoods of Christian residents.

CINEMA. The first motion pictures played in **Aleppo** and **Damascus** in the early 20th century. During **World War I**, the **Ottoman** authorities showed German newsreels. American and **French** silent films gained a following during the **French Mandate** years. Syrian villagers became familiar with the medium when the French authorities toured with **educational** films and newsreels. The first attempts by Syrians to produce films suffered from insufficient capital, technical difficulties, and **censorship** by the French authorities for their own political reasons and because of pressure from Muslim and **Christian** religious leaders anxious about the cinema's possible effects on morality. Censors continued to monitor film content for political, religious, and sexual material after independence. Furthermore, filmmakers must obtain the government's permission to make and exhibit a film once it has been shot. The small number of cinemas in the country has limited the prospects for the growth of a private film **industry**; consequently, filmmakers have depended on government backing.

In the 1950s and 1960s, **Egyptian**, American, and European films saturated Syrian cinemas. In 1958, the creation of a Ministry of Culture and Guidance offered a firmer foundation for Syrians keen on making films. The

ministry had a division for films that concentrated on such themes as folklore and **archaeology**. In 1963, the ministry established the General Film Organization to subsidize filmmakers and concentrate equipment in one agency. In the 1970s, directors from Egypt, **Lebanon**, and **Iraq** made most of the films in Syria. At that time, films addressed political themes, especially the **Palestinian** issue and social inequality. In the 1980s, Syrian directors emerged to put their stamp on the **art**, which they shifted to more subjective and unconventional themes. The most popular and successful figure is **Durayd al-Lahham**, who, along with Nihad al-Qal'i, has made more than 20 comic films since 1964.

CIRCASSIANS. Non-Arab **Sunni** Muslims who fled the **Russian** conquest of their homeland in the Caucasus Mountains in the late 1800s. In the 1860s, the first Circassian **refugees** settled in small towns and villages north of **Aleppo** and in **Jazira** along the **Khabur River**, but high mortality rates from disease rapidly reduced their numbers. A second wave of refugees arrived in 1878, during the course of the Russo-**Ottoman** war of 1877–1878. This time, the Ottomans directed them to settle in southern Syria, including the **Hawran**, the **Golan Heights**, and **Transjordan**, where the colonists founded Amman. A small number took up residence in villages east of **Homs** and **Hama**. During the **French Mandate** era, Circassians, like other **minorities**, were recruited into the **Troupes Spéciales du Levant**, which the **French** authorities used to repress nationalist strikes and demonstrations. During the **June 1967 War**, some 25,000 Circassians living in the Golan Heights were expelled. Most of the refugees resettled in **Damascus** and nearby villages; some immigrated to the **United States**.

CIVIL SOCIETY. Many observers of the rapid collapse of authoritarian communist regimes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union between 1989 and 1991 considered the proliferation of independent citizen associations a major contributor to these democratic political transitions. The concept of “civil society” gained popularity as an analytical category for social scientists and an aspiration for liberal reformers in authoritarian countries. Syrians hoping for a comparable political transformation at that time were disappointed at the **Ba'th Party** regime's resilience.

In the early months of **Bashar al-Asad's** presidency, he gave indications that he might retreat from his father **Hafiz al-Asad's** legacy of authoritarian rule. Many Syrians hoped that the country's new leader would initiate measures to liberalize the political system. In September 2000, the government announced that it would allow discussion of political reform at individuals' homes and public venues. Widespread eagerness for open discussion and a freer political climate spurred groups of professionals, intellectuals, and inde-

pendent members of the People's Assembly to hold meetings to discuss ways to introduce the rule of law, political pluralism, and security for individual rights. These groups, known as Civil Society Forums, appeared in **Damascus** and spread to other cities.

One of the most remarkable moments during that time was the 27 September 2000 publication by a London Arabic-language newspaper of a call for fundamental political reform. The statement was signed by 99 prominent intellectuals, artists, and professionals who had not previously expressed dissent. The list included the poet **Adonis**, novelists **Haydar Haydar** and Nabil Sulayman, political philosophers Sadiq al-Azm and Tayyib Tizini, filmmakers, actors, professors, lawyers, physicians, and others. The short manifesto urged the lifting of emergency and martial law, amnesty and release of political prisoners, establishment of basic political freedoms, and abolishing government surveillance of citizens.

In Damascus, a number of small meetings were held to set up Committees for the Revival of Civil Society, but their organizers wound up clashing with Bashar al-Asad when their political aspirations clearly exceeded the limits he would tolerate. An official backlash began in early 2001, when government officials condemned the committees and even criticized the use of the term civil society. President Asad warned that criticizing the Ba'th Party, the policies of his late father, and the **armed forces** served the interests of Syria's enemies. In August and September, the government took a series of measures to suppress the civil society movement with arrests of its most outspoken and influential figures. They included **Ma'mun al-Homsi** and **Riyad al-Sayf**, two independent members of parliament; **Riyad al-Turk**, leader of the Communist Party Political Bureau and a former political prisoner (released in November 2002); **Arif Dalila**, an economist and one of the founders of the Committees for the Revival of Civil Society; and several **human rights** activists. At the same time as this wave of arrests, the regime issued a decree that reinforced and extended government powers to punish expression deemed harmful to the state, the **economy**, and army morale.

The next sustained effort for political reform would not be seen until the **Syrian Uprising**. The revolutions in Tunisia and **Egypt** in early 2011 sparked protest movements throughout Syria that demanded political reform. While the Asad regime responded to the movement by announcing some political reforms, it also engaged in a massive crackdown on protesters and opposition groups. A number of dissidents who had been active in the early phase of Bashar al-Asad's rule became part of the broad spectrum of opposition forces seeking to rid Syria of one-party rule in a protracted contest that degenerated into civil war by the end of 2011.

COFFEEHOUSES. When coffee became part of Middle Eastern consumption and leisure in the early 16th century, coffeehouses (serving men only) followed close behind. The popularity of the beverage and public places devoted to it soon overwhelmed suspicions of its permissibility under **Islamic** law (**shari'a**), even though pious opinion continued to regard the coffeehouse as a threat to morality because of its association with drug use and illicit sexual liaisons. During the 17th century, centrally located, large coffeehouses and smaller neighborhood establishments became typical features of Syrian cities. Patrons also enjoyed going to the outskirts of town to tree-shaded coffeehouses situated along rivers. The coffeehouse attracted a diverse clientele and hosted such entertainment as recitation of poetry, music, storytelling, and performance of *karagoz*, or puppet shadow plays. Customers could also smoke tobacco in a water pipe while playing cards or backgammon. Their low overhead and popularity ensured their profitability, hence they frequently formed part of philanthropic bequests (**waqfs**) as steady sources of revenue for mosques and religious schools. Since the late 19th century, coffeehouses have served as incubators for social and political change because they provide educated youth with a public setting to discuss current issues.

COMMITTEE OF UNION AND PROGRESS (CUP). A secret society, also referred to as the Young Turks, founded by advocates of constitutional government for the **Ottoman Empire** in 1889. First established among students at Istanbul's military college, the movement's early membership included educated young men from various parts of the empire. During the 1890s, graduates stationed as bureaucrats and army officers in **Aleppo, Damascus, Dayr al-Zur, Hama, and Homs** set up cells that attracted the interest and support of educated youth, **ulama**, civil servants, and urban notables. Authorities in Syria first detected CUP activities in 1896, among **Turkish** officers disgruntled because of arrears in salaries and shortages in provisions. An investigation led to charges against several officers, civil administrators, and Damascus notables. After the arrest and exile of several members, no further evidence of Young Turk activity appeared until 1906, when a new cell was set up by junior officers upset with the endemic problem of arrears in salaries.

In July 1908, military units stationed in Macedonia and loyal to the CUP mutinied against Sultan **Abdulhamid II** and forced him to restore the 1876 **constitution**. The CUP initially stayed in the background of politics, but its leaders increasingly asserted themselves until they seized power in a coup d'état in 1913. The CUP advocated policies designed to strengthen central control over the empire's provinces, including the exclusive use of the **Turkish language** in official business and **education**. Some Syrian Arabs believed that the CUP sought to "Turkify" the empire, that is, forcibly impose

Turkish language and culture on the polyglot population. This perception prompted a defensive cultural reaction that sowed the seeds of the first **Arab nationalist** groups.

In 1914, the CUP's leadership governed the empire and made the fateful decision to enter **World War I** on the side of Germany. At the end of the war, with the Ottoman Empire defeated and occupied by foreign armies, the CUP leaders fled to Germany and the Soviet Union. *See also* JAZA'IRI, TAHIR AL- (1852–1920); QASIMI, JAMAL AL-DIN AL- (1866–1914).

CONSPIRACY OF 1956. A far-reaching plot, code-named "Operation Straggle," hatched in Beirut to overthrow Syria's neutralist government and install a pro-Western regime. It was conceived by Syrian exiles in **Lebanon**, including members of the **Syrian Social National Party (SSNP)** and purged army officers, who had support from the government of **Iraq**. **Adib al-Shishakli**, who had seized power in a military coup in 1949 and ruled until 1954, was living in **France** at the time and initially showed some interest in the plot, but he ditched the enterprise when he calculated its low chances for success. **Great Britain** was to provide weapons and funds, and a number of civilian politicians were to help execute a coup. SSNP militiamen were to infiltrate Syria, assassinate leading leftist politicians, and trigger **Druze** and **Alawi** risings, which would be armed with weapons smuggled from Iraq. Military intelligence uncovered the plot and, on 23 November 1956, announced the arrest of those participants living in Syria. The coup was timed to coincide with the attack on **Egypt** by Britain, France, and **Israel** at the end of October in a bid to eliminate the two neutralist Arab governments of Egypt and Syria and restore Western dominance in Arab politics. The arrests and trials of the conspirators damaged conservative political forces and boosted the standing of leftist parties.

CONSTITUTION. Syria first experienced a constitutional regime when it was still part of the **Ottoman Empire** from 1876 to 1877 and 1908 to 1918. After **World War I**, **Amir Faysal** tried to set up an independent Arab kingdom in Syria, and he handed the **Syrian Congress** the task of drafting a constitution. A draft was produced, but the congress's consideration of it was interrupted by **France's** invasion in July 1920. The abortive constitution provided for a monarchy and bicameral legislature. During the **French Mandate** era, elections to a Constituent Assembly were held in April 1928. The assembly convened in June and issued a draft constitution by August. This first Syrian constitution provided for a parliamentary republic, equality for members of all **religions** and religious freedom, and a Muslim president. The French objected to articles declaring the unity of Syria, **Lebanon**, **Palestine**, and **Transjordan**; Syrian control over a national army; and presidential pow-

ers to conduct **foreign policy**. Consequently, French high commissioner Henri Ponsot adjourned the assembly. Following two years of political stalemate, the French enacted a modified version of the 1928 draft. When Syria became independent in 1943, it was under the terms of the constitution of 1930.

Alterations in the Syrian constitution were first heralded during the brief regime of **Husni al-Za'im**, who called for the drafting of a new document and appointed a special committee that produced a new constitution in July 1949, but **Sami al-Hinnawi's** coup in mid-August aborted that project, and he authorized elections for a Constituent Assembly. These were held in November, and the second **People's Party**, which generally supported Hinnawi, gained a plurality of seats. **Adib al-Shishakli's** overthrow of Hinnawi in December interrupted the Constituent Assembly's work, but it reconvened in 1950 and drew up a new constitution. Its most controversial article was one declaring **Islam** to be the religion of the state. The **Syrian Social National Party**, the **Syrian Communist Party**, the **Ba'th Party**, and the country's various **Christian** communities argued for a secular constitution, while the **Muslim Brotherhood** supported the condition concerning religion. The Constituent Assembly ultimately agreed on a solution by preserving the 1930 constitution's stipulation that the head of state be a Muslim, and, in September 1950, the assembly ratified the new document. Its main departures from the 1930 constitution lay in the proclamation of detailed civil liberties and the greater powers it assigned to the legislative branch compared to the executive branch. Shishakli challenged the constitution when he assumed dictatorial powers in November 1951. In March 1953, he called for a new Constituent Assembly to draw up yet another constitution. The 1953 document tipped the balance of power back in favor of the executive branch, but when Shishakli was overthrown in February 1954, Syria's civilian government restored the 1950 constitution.

With the formation of the **United Arab Republic (UAR)** in 1958, Syria came under a new constitutional arrangement that submerged Syrian representation in an **Egyptian**-dominated assembly and assigned broad powers to President Gamal Abd al-Nasser. When Syria seceded from the UAR, the 1950 constitution was restored, but a new provisional constitution was issued in November 1961 to govern elections for a Constituent Assembly. The military's continuous interference in politics, however, prevented implementation of that plan. The Ba'th Party regime introduced one more provisional constitution in April 1964. This document assigned executive powers to a new body called the Presidential Council and legislative powers to the **National Revolutionary Command Council**, stipulated state ownership of **industry** and minerals, and diluted the place of Islam by stating that **shari'a** comprises *a* source of legislation rather than *the* source.

Significant constitutional changes began in May 1969, when the **Neo-Ba`th** regime issued a new provisional constitution declaring Syria a democratic socialist republic. The regime of **Hafiz al-Asad** promulgated a permanent constitution in March 1973, which was similar to the 1969 document. It, too, stated that the head of state must be a Muslim, that Islamic law is the source of legislation, and that the Ba`th Party is the country's vanguard party. In keeping with Asad's supreme authority, the constitution also provides for strong presidential powers: He was commander in chief of the armed forces, appointed the prime minister and cabinet members, and had the power to dissolve the legislature and rule by decree. The legislative branch consists of a unicameral People's Assembly, whose members are elected every four years and vote on legislation drafted by the executive branch but may not initiate legislation. As for the judicial branch, the constitution provides for its independence.

When Hafiz al-Asad died in June 2000, he had been preparing his son **Bashar al-Asad** to succeed him, but the constitution stipulated a minimum age of 40 for the head of state. The People's Assembly then amended the constitution by lowering the minimum to 34 years, precisely Bashar's age at the time, to make his succession formally legal.

In the tumult wrought by the **Syrian Uprising**, the government tried to assuage the opposition by holding a constitutional referendum in February 2012. The new constitutional provisions passed, but many opponents of the Asad government decried the referendum as a sham. The changes allowed multiple political parties to participate in elections, thereby abolishing the one-party system that had dominated politics for decades and creating presidential elections with seven-year term limits and the possibility of one re-election.

CORRECTIVE MOVEMENT. The 13 November 1970 coup d'état launched by **Hafiz al-Asad** against the radical **Neo-Ba`th** regime headed by **Salah al-Jadid**. Tensions had been growing between the two former comrades, who had been founding members of the **Military Committee** a decade earlier in Cairo. Jadid's power base lay in the **Ba`th Party**, while Asad controlled the **armed forces**. On 30 October, Jadid convened an emergency party congress, which dismissed Asad from the Syrian Army and expelled him from the party. The congress ended on 12 November, and the next day, Asad arrested Jadid and other rivals. Asad publicly announced that his seizure of power was intended to rectify the excesses of the previous regime, and he moved to broaden his political base by building a coalition with other political parties, enlarging the private sector's role in the **economy** and mending relations with other Arab states. The Corrective Movement was the last in a long line of military coups dating to March 1949.

CORRUPTION. In **Ottoman** times, the sultan was the ultimate owner of all wealth, and his appointed officials, essentially his servants, were generally expected to help themselves to whatever they could accumulate. There was not a well-defined line between compensation for fulfilling duties and illicit private gain. The most obvious case was for tax collectors. They were expected to acquire their own compensation from the same pool of revenue that fed the imperial treasury, so the opportunity to embezzle could prove irresistible. On the other hand, the ill-gotten assets of the sultan's servants could be suddenly confiscated upon dismissal or death, whereupon they reverted to their "legal" owner, the sultan.

Given the clandestine nature of corruption in both historical and contemporary eras, it is resistant to systematic analysis. Nonetheless, many observers of Syria's political and economic structures consider it a salient feature. There is both petty corruption on the scale of small bribes for favors from low-ranking party officials and government bureaucrats, as well as much grander instances in which powerful military officers and government figures use their positions to accumulate fortunes through smuggling, kickbacks, and embezzlement.

The causes of corruption are numerous. Loyalty is more important than competence in climbing the ranks of military, civilian, and party hierarchies. There is little institutional control or oversight of **public-sector** companies that might legally import equipment for manufacturing projects and then resell it to private businessmen for a substantial profit. In addition, the **armed forces** operate completely outside the purview of the rest of the government, so for years officers smuggled drugs cultivated in **Lebanon** with impunity until international political pressure brought about the curtailment of that illicit **trade**.

Another ubiquitous cultural factor that breeds corruption is patronage, which operates through connections, or "*wasta*." An individual with many connections is said to have a lot of "vitamin w," for *wasta*. These personal connections express the expectation that an individual will assist a **family** member, fellow villager, or coreligionist if one can. To refuse such assistance would violate norms of honorable behavior and reciprocity.

Given the anecdotal nature of evidence about corruption, it is impossible to calculate how much it costs the Syrian **economy**, but the anecdotes are so numerous that corruption undoubtedly weighs it down. The political benefits, however, are such that the **Ba'th Party** regime is unlikely to attack it in a comprehensive manner. In fact, occasional, high-profile anticorruption campaigns are designed to dole exemplary punishment to the worst abusers and satisfy a public demand to curb flagrant transgressions. It is noteworthy that **Bashar al-Asad** held the anticorruption portfolio for a few years before becoming president, as though it would mark him as a fresh, clean leader and set him apart from his father's tainted cronies. His regime, however, was not

marked by the disappearance of corruption, even though several high-ranking officials in public-sector firms were convicted for “economic crimes” and sentenced to prison terms. Members of the president’s family, for instance, his cousin, **Rami Makhluf**, accumulated tremendous wealth through their domination of lucrative sectors of the economy. In 2011, Transparency International, a nongovernmental organization that analyzes corruption, ranked Syria as 129 out of 183 rated countries and gave it a score of 2.6 out of 10 on the Corruption Perceptions Index.

CRUSADES. When this invasion of Syria commenced in 1097, the land was divided among **Saljuk** princes under the influence of their regents, or **Ata-begs**. The conquest of Antioch in 1098 marked the Crusaders’ first success. Their primary aim was the recovery for Christendom of Jerusalem (conquered in 1099), so most campaigns focused on seizing and defending the holy city and securing the Syrian coast for communications and transport to Europe. Consequently, the Crusaders threatened, but did not rule, the Syrian interior or its major towns. The four Frankish states were the County of Edessa (1098–1144), the Principality of Antioch (1098–1268), the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem (1099–1187, moved to Acre when the Muslims regained Jerusalem, 1192–1291), and the County of Tripoli (1109–1289).

The first Muslim leader of counterattacks against the Crusaders was the Atabeg **Imad al-Din al-Zangi** (r. 1127–1146), the ruler of **Aleppo** and Mosul. The Muslim offensive was pursued by **Nur al-Din Mahmud** and **Saladin** until 1192. Although the Europeans briefly recovered Jerusalem (1239–1244), the first half of the 13th century mostly saw minor skirmishes between Latin kingdoms and **Ayyubid** principalities. The Franks’ military energies focused instead on **Egypt** because of the access it offered to the Red Sea and Indian Ocean **trade**. The final Muslim assault on the Latin kingdoms came under the command of Syria’s new Turkish masters, the **Mamluk** sultans, beginning in the 1260s with the storming of coastal and inland holdings from Nazareth to Antioch. The last toehold of the Crusades, the island of Arwad, fell in 1303.

CURRENCY. The first modern Syrian currency was issued during the **French Mandate** period. In 1924, the Banque de Syrie et du Grand Liban, a private bank with **French**-majority ownership, issued the Syrian–Lebanese pound, or *lira*. The lira was tied to the French franc until 1941, when British forces invaded Syria to overthrow the Vichy regime and pegged the lira to the British sterling.

The Syrian pound is the basic unit of currency and is comprised of 100 piasters. It is a nonconvertible currency. In 1963, the **Ba’th Party** regime imposed strict controls on foreign exchange transactions. Since that time, the

government has maintained as many as five different exchange rates that vastly overvalue the Syrian pound. The most common rates are known as the official rate, the flexible rate, and a special “promotion” rate for travelers and **tourists**. The gap between the official rate and the black-market rate widened in the 1970s. By 1981, one dollar fetched roughly 40 Syrian pounds, but the official rate was only four pounds to the dollar. The artificial exchange rate and a decline in Arab aid contributed to an acute shortage of foreign exchange in the mid-1980s. That crisis prompted the government to devalue the currency from four Syrian pounds per dollar to 11.2 per dollar. At the same time, the government tried to curb the black-market currency dealers with a decree that stiffened the penalty for possession of foreign currency by imposing prison sentences of 15 to 25 years. The decree only diverted the activity of Syrian currency traders to **Lebanese banks**. In the mid-1990s, the government closed the gap between the free-market rate (about 50 Syrian pounds to the dollar) and the official rate (around 45 Syrian pounds to the dollar). The ban on foreign currency trading was repealed as part of the economic relaxation measures taken in the second half of 2000, under **Bashar al-Asad**. After the **Syrian Uprising** broke out, international sanctions and internal disruptions severely damaged the Syrian pound, which dropped 40 percent on official exchanges and 60 percent on unofficial exchanges by the end of 2012. *See also* INFLATION.

D

DAMASCUS. The capital of modern Syria, Damascus is located on the eastern slopes of the Anti-Lebanon Mountains on the edge of the desert. Situated in an arid region, Damascus has been the site of urban settlement for more than 4,000 years because of the waters borne by the **Barada River** and their exploitation to irrigate the **Ghuta** oasis around the city. The city is mentioned in Pharaonic records of the 15th century BC, and it served as the main city of the Aramaean kingdom of Aram beginning in the 11th century BC. Like the rest of Syria, Damascus passed under a series of Mesopotamian powers between the 8th and 6th centuries BC, followed by a period of Persian domination before Alexander the Great's conquest in 333 BC initiated nearly a millennium of Greco-Roman hegemony. The walls that surround much of the old city and its main thoroughfares date from Roman times.

In the course of the Muslim Arab conquest of Syria, the townspeople negotiated a peaceful Arab occupation in 635, but the next year, a powerful **Byzantine** army marched toward Damascus with the intention of recovering it. The Arabs withdrew south to the **Yarmuk River**, where the decisive **Battle of Yarmuk** took place in August 636. The Arabs then permanently retook the city at the end of the year. Damascus played its greatest role in **Islamic** history when the **Umayyad caliphs** (661–750) used it as their capital, but when the **Abbasid dynasty** (750–1258) rose to power, the city was relegated to provincial status. For the next four centuries, different powers ruled northern and southern Syria, and Damascus remained the most important city in the south. In 1154, it became the capital of a reunified Syria under the rule of **Nur al-Din Mahmud**, who fortified the city's defenses and revived its religious institutions. When **Saladin** incorporated Damascus into the **Ayyubid** sultanate (1176–1260), the city was again reduced to a provincial capital, this time ruled from **Egypt**. Domination by rulers based in Egypt continued during the **Mamluk sultanate** (1260–1516) until the **Ottoman** conquest, which marked the beginning of 400 years of rule from Istanbul.

During the 18th century, Damascus gained a greater degree of autonomy under the rule of various **Azm** governors, and, in the early 19th century, it briefly came under the authority of **Muhammad Ali**, the ambitious ruler of

Egypt. Following the Ottoman recovery of Syria in 1840, Damascus entered a period of transition characterized by the Ottoman reforms known as the **Tanzimat** and increasing economic interaction with Europe. The stresses these forces brought to the fore erupted in the **July 1860 Massacre** of many of the city's **Christians** by **Sunni** townsmen and **Druzes** from the nearby countryside. The Ottomans responded with measures to tighten central control of the provincial capital, a process reinforced by such improvements in **transportation** as the **railway** linking Damascus to Beirut in 1894.

After Ottoman rule ended in 1918, Damascus became the capital of **Amir Faysal's** short-lived state, then the seat of the **French Mandate's** representative in Syria and the capital of independent Syria in 1946. Since the late Ottoman period, the city has undergone physical expansion and population growth from 230,000 in the 1940s to approximately 2.5 million today. During the early 20th century, a number of extramural suburbs sprouted up, and during the French Mandate, these new quarters overran garden areas that had ringed the walled city for centuries and replaced them with modern commercial and residential districts. The last 50 years have seen the capital engulf outlying villages and creep up the lower slopes of **Mount Qasiyun**.

The dramatic increases in size and population have resulted from a steady flow of rural migrants to the capital seeking jobs and amenities often lacking in villages. City residents maintain a keen awareness of the distinction between old Damascene families and newcomers, but the casual visitor will not notice tensions and will instead be drawn to the well-preserved historic quarters, mosques, and monuments. As for the appearance of contemporary Damascus, the modern **architecture** serves practical rather than ornamental purposes, so the "streetscape" is unimpressive. The steady drift of dust from Mount Qasiyun ordinarily gives the city a drab appearance at the street level, except during the brief spring, when wildflowers dot the hills and planters along boulevards, or after the occasional snowfall whitens the mountain slopes.

Everyday life does not revolve around the city's historic axis, but the two main hubs of livelihood, private commerce and public agencies, which naturally include government ministries but also **public-sector** companies and **Ba'th Party** offices. The social life of most Damascenes, like other Syrians, centers on the **family**, with members visiting one another's homes on a routine basis. Commercial thoroughfares and public parks attract evening strollers. Such cultural venues as **cinemas** and the **theater** engage the interest of a fairly small segment of the population, while the traditional setting of the all-male **coffeehouse** still has some appeal.

The **tourism** sector saw impressive development under **Bashar al-Asad's** rule and became an important part of the city's commerce. Boutique hotels and restaurants attracted both U.S. and European tourists, and in some years, these hotels had difficulty accommodating all visitors. The slow pace of new

hotel construction created a bottleneck and prevented the tourism **industry** from realizing its full potential. The **Syrian Uprising** has disrupted tourism as widespread violence has deterred many travelers. Crowds at hotels and restaurants have thinned out, and some establishments have been forced to close. Real estate also witnessed a period of speculation in the early 2000s. By 2009, office space in Damascus was ranked the eighth most expensive in the world.

At the beginning of the Syrian Uprising, daily life in Damascus showed few signs of the political violence sweeping the country. In 2012, however, violence began to spill into the streets, particularly in the suburbs, where opposition groups and security services clashed. There was a marked increase in violence that coincided with the arrival of Kofi Annan's special envoy to Syria, as part of the Annan Mission dispatched by the **United Nations**. Car bombings intended for police headquarters and air force intelligence offices killed 27 people and wounded 140 people, and the following week, resistance fighters clashed with security services in the Mezze district, an affluent quarter where many business people reside.

DAMASCUS DECLARATION FOR NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC CHANGE. A document issued on 16 October 2005, by more than 200 activists and intellectuals, calling for an end to the 1963 **Emergency Law** and demanding greater freedom of speech. Many of the declaration's signatories formed the National Council of the Damascus Declaration to press for political reform through the semblance of a political party. The National Council represented a broad political spectrum, from the religious **Muslim Brotherhood** to secular leftist parties, along with **Kurdish** and **Assyrian** parties. Between 2006 and 2008, several of the document's chief architects were sentenced to prison. Security officials also harassed members of the National Council for antigovernment activity. Ideological and factional tensions resulted in groups pulling out, including the Muslim Brotherhood in 2006. During the **Syrian Uprising**, signatories to the Damascus Declaration have been important figures in antiregime demonstrations and opposition organizations.

DAMASCUS MASSACRE. *See* JULY 1860 DAMASCUS MASSACRE.

DAMASCUS SPRING. When **Bashar al-Asad** became president in 2000, there was much optimism that the new leader would introduce liberal political reforms. Soon after his inauguration in July, a period of free expression ensued, known as the Damascus Spring. Intellectuals, activists, and journalists were permitted to hold public forums to discuss governmental reforms, and opposition leaders were able to advocate publicly for greater political

freedoms; however, the movement was short-lived. In early 2001, the regime reversed course and began arresting outspoken critics of the government for allegedly threatening Syria's stability. During the subsequent Damascus Winter, forums and public halls were shut down or censored, and **security forces** persecuted activists and intellectuals who had called for civil liberties. By the fall of 2001, the old taboos on political expression had been restored.

DAR`A. A town of approximately 100,000 in southwestern Syria near the border with **Jordan**. Throughout Syrian history, Dar'a was a minor provincial **trading** center on the route from **Damascus** to Arabia and a hub for the rich agricultural **Hawran** region. It rose to prominence in 2011, as the cradle of the **Syrian Uprising**, when government forces tortured a group of schoolchildren for writing antigovernment slogans on the walls of their school.

DARDARI, ABDALLAH AL- (1964–). Journalist and deputy prime minister for economic affairs from 2005 to 2011. Dardari is a native of **Damascus**. He graduated from the University of Southern California's School of International Affairs before pursuing a master's degree from the London School of Economics and Political Science. He worked as a journalist for the Saudi-owned, London-based *al-Hayat* **newspaper** before assuming his first governmental position as head of Syria's State Planning Commission in 2003. In 2005, he was appointed deputy prime minister for economic affairs. As one of the main architects of Syria's **economic reform** program, Dardari authored the country's 10th and 11th **five-year plans**. He worked to increase foreign investment and implement reforms that would help the national **economy** adapt to high rates of **inflation**, unemployment, and budget deficits. Dardari was the chief Syrian negotiator of the **European Union**–Syrian Association Agreement, and he established the Syrian–Danish Business Council to facilitate economic and commercial cooperation. He was also a member of the Monetary and Credit Board, as well as the High Council for Investment. Upon his resignation from office in 2011, Dardari was named ambassador to **Turkey**, a prominent mission given the dynamic and sensitive ties between the two countries.

DAWALIBI, MA`RUF AL- (1907–2004). Professor of law at Damascus University. Dawalibi was elected to represent his native **Aleppo** in the 1947 parliament and the 1949 Constituent Assembly. He joined the **People's Party** in 1948 and, by 1951, was one of the leading figures in the faction that favored a neutralist **foreign policy** and social reform at home. During the cabinet crisis of November 1951, he stepped forward to form a government that promised to establish civilian control over the gendarmerie and Ministry

of Defense. If he had been able to follow through on this, **Adib al-Shishakli** would have lost his grip on power, so he disbanded Dawalibi's cabinet on 29 November, a mere 12 hours after it had been formed.

A decade later, Dawalibi gained a second chance to lead the country after Syria seceded from the **United Arab Republic (UAR)** in September 1961. After the People's Party prevailed in national elections that December, he formed the **secessionist regime's** first elected cabinet from the conservative People's Party and **National Party**. Prime Minister Dawalibi criticized the UAR's record on the **economy** for imposing stifling restrictions on the private sector and disrupting **agricultural** production. He tried to balance the demands of private capital and the popular measures instituted under the UAR, so he pledged to preserve legislation benefiting peasants and workers and reverse the government's intrusion in **trade** and **industry** by rescinding the July 1961 nationalization of industry and trade. In contrast to a liberal economic policy, Dawalibi retained the UAR's emergency laws to use against the press, trade unions, and the **Syrian Communist Party**, whose leader, **Khalid Bakdash**, was refused entry when he attempted to return to Syria. Dawalibi also left in place the network of state security courts and put the Syrian Army in control of district administration.

As in 1951, Dawalibi refused to be hemmed in by the army's insistence on a role in politics; indeed, on 24 March 1962, he publicly criticized officers for meddling. The army command then demanded that President **Nazim al-Qudsi** dissolve Dawalibi's cabinet, but he refused. Four days later, **Abd al-Karim al-Nahlawi** carried out a coup that led to two weeks of political strife that ended in Dawalibi's resignation. During the decades of **Ba'th Party** rule, this veteran politician spent most of his life in **Saudi Arabia**, where he advised the rulers for many years before retiring. He died in Saudi Arabia in 2004. *See also* SOCIALIST DECREES.

DAYR AL-ZUR. This town of about 200,000 is a provincial seat situated on the **Euphrates River**. **Ottoman** authorities established Dayr al-Zur as a district center during the 19th-century **Tanzimat** era as part of Istanbul's effort to establish its authority over **Bedouin** tribes in the Middle Euphrates region. In recent times, it became a convenient base for **tourist** excursions to such ancient and classical (Hellenistic and **Byzantine**) **archaeological** sites as Mari and Dura Europos. A suspension bridge constructed during the **French Mandate** period spans the Euphrates. The town is near the country's major **petroleum** fields and **mining** resources.

DEMILITARIZED ZONES (DMZ). The **Armistice of 1949** created three DMZs between Syria and **Israel**. Although Article Five of the armistice declared that sovereignty over the zones had yet to be determined, Israel

pushed its claim to possess the land. Syria's refusal to concede this point led to a series of escalating clashes between 1951 and 1967. Israel initiated projects to develop **water** resources and cultivate lands in the zones. Arab villages that obstructed Israeli expansion were destroyed and their inhabitants expelled. In response, Syrian forces would fire on the Israelis, whereupon Israel would retaliate. Fishing rights on the Sea of Galilee provided another point of conflict. In December 1955, Syrian forces tried to prevent Israeli fishing boats from plying waters near the DMZ. In retaliation, Israeli forces launched a broad attack on the Syrians. When Syrian fishermen ventured into the Sea of Galilee, Israeli gunboats would fire on them. In February 1960, Israel pursued cultivation of lands in the southern DMZ, again triggering Syrian fire. This time, Israeli land and air forces attacked a Syrian village and military positions overlooking the DMZ. Fighting escalated further in 1964, when Syria threatened to divert tributaries of the Jordan River to thwart Israel's National Water Carrier project. Israel's use of armor, artillery, and airpower forced the Syrians to halt their diversion of the tributaries, but they then resorted to shelling Israeli settlements in the DMZ.

Between August 1966 and June 1967, the **Neo-Ba'th** regime began an aggressive policy of launching air strikes, in addition to frequent shelling of Israeli settlements. On 6 April 1967, there occurred a major air battle in which Syria lost six fighter planes. At that point, Syria requested **Egyptian** support. President Gamal Abd al-Nasser's handling of the crisis led to the outbreak of the **June 1967 War**, in which Israel drove the Syrians away from the 1949 armistice lines and occupied the **Golan Heights**.

DESERT PALACES. Some of the earliest specimens of Arab **architecture** are a string of palace complexes in the desert between the **Euphrates River** and eastern portions of **Jordan**. The best-preserved and most thoroughly excavated sites are Qasr al-Hayr al-Gharbi (western) and Qasr al-Hayr al-Sharqi (eastern), located near **Palmyra**. The earliest construction at the former site dates to the Roman era. The **Umayyad** caliph al-Hisham (r. 724–743) developed both locales with caravanserais, mosques, baths, and aristocratic residences. The palaces are notable for their exuberant **art** and decoration in stucco relief, tiles, and painting of hunting scenes and human figures, contrary to common notions of an Arab Muslim taboo against any representation of living creatures. Al-Hisham's purpose for developing these sites is unknown because the written records are mute, so we must depend on the interpretative speculation of **archaeologists** to tease their meaning from the material remains.

DROUGHT. Syria's longest and most severe drought in modern times lasted from 2006 to 2011, and affected approximately 60 percent of the country's land area. It had catastrophic effects on millions whose livelihoods depended on crops and livestock, particularly in the northeastern provinces of **al-Raqqa**, **Dayr al-Zur**, and **al-Hasaka**, where the **Khabur River** went completely dry. Some scientists regard the drought as an effect of climate change that forebodes decades of low rainfall and long-term loss of croplands and pastures. The dry spell had many effects: the extent of arable land contracted, **agricultural** output declined, Syria went from being a grain exporter to an importer, food prices spiked, and herders suffered huge losses of livestock due to shortfalls in grain feed and desertification of pasture. Many village children stopped going to school to work for petty wages to assist their families. As many as 2 to 3 million Syrians were driven into poverty, many forced to survive on a diet of bread and tea. Figures for the number of Syrians forced off the land are hard to pin down, but an estimated 800,000 people abandoned villages and migrated to the country's already congested cities. Syria's Dust Bowl unfolded on the eve of the **Arab Spring**, and **Bashar al-Asad** regime's inability to cope with its effects likely added fuel to widespread dissatisfaction with a corrupt system that failed to shield the country's most vulnerable against the drought's disastrous impact.

DRUZES. Members of this heterodox religious sect call themselves *muwahhidun*, "those who declare God's oneness." The Druzes comprise about 3 percent of the population. Three-quarters of the Druze reside in **Suwayda** province, or **Jabal Druze**, where they account for nearly 90 percent of the population. Other concentrations of Druze settlement include the **Golan Heights**, **Damascus** and its environs, and the mountains west of **Aleppo**.

Historically, the Druze **religion** is an offshoot of **Isma'ili Shi'ism**, which appeared in the time of the **Fatimid** caliph al-Hakim (996–1021), who claimed to be the incarnation of God. An early preacher in the cult of al-Hakim was a Persian Isma'ili, Hamza ibn Ahmad. He recruited a band of missionaries to spread the faith throughout the Fatimid domains in Arabia, **Egypt**, and Syria. The name "Druze" is derived from one of the new religion's propagandists, Muhammad ibn Isma'il al-Darazi. Other preachers won followers throughout Syria, especially in Aleppo and Damascus. When al-Hakim suddenly and mysteriously disappeared in 1021, official support for the new religion ended, and the next caliph ruthlessly suppressed it, so that Druzism survived only in isolated pockets of **Lebanon** and northern Syria. Active leadership of the movement passed to an associate of Hamza ibn Ahmad named Baha al-Din al-Muqtana, also called al-Samuqi. This latter figure played the central role in creating a formal structure for the incipient religion and gaining new converts. By the time of Baha al-Din's death in

1043, a corpus of Druze teachings had been established in six books known as *The Noble Wisdom*, which contain 111 epistles by Hamza, Baha al-Din, and Isma'il al-Tamimi.

The beliefs and practices of the Druze religion are supposed to be kept secret from all outsiders, but in recent years scholars have published their religious texts. They teach belief in one God who was incarnate in the person of al-Hakim, and they hold that the believer must accept God's actions and submit to Him. Conversely, the Druzes must reject Satan. The epistles also emphasize truthfulness and the imperative of maintaining communal solidarity. Druzes believe that their religion stands as a successor to ancient monotheistic cults reaching back to such Hellenistic figures as Pythagoras, Plato, and Plotinus, as well as the prophets of the Bible and the Qur'an. The Druzes do not observe the Muslim rituals of prayer, fasting, or pilgrimage. Another difference between the Druze religion and **Islam** is that, for the most part, the Druzes do not accept converts. They possess their own specialized religious leaders who manage such civil matters as marriage (unlike Muslims, the Druzes do not allow polygamy) and inheritance. Full knowledge of their teachings is reserved for the religious hierarchy because one must demonstrate one's worthiness before initiation into esoteric knowledge.

Most Druzes lived in Lebanon until the 18th century, when some of them migrated to a plateau east of the **Hawran** in Jabal Druze. In **Ottoman** times, they preserved their autonomy in the face of Istanbul's attempts to impose regular taxation in the late 19th century. When the **French Mandate** was imposed in 1920, the Druzes sought to keep apart from a centrally administered regime, and the **French** placated them by creating an autonomous regime similar to the one they developed for the **Alawis** in northwest Syria. Nonetheless, French meddling in Jabal Druze sparked a rebellion under the leadership of **Sultan al-Atrash**. The upheaval spread to the rest of Syria in the **Great Revolt** of 1925–1927. After the suppression of the revolt, the French continued the separate administration of Jabal Druze until 1936, when it was annexed to the rest of Syria. Damascus appointed **Nasib al-Bakri** to govern the province, but Druze opposition to rule by a non-Druze led the government to appoint a Druze to the office in 1937. France reinstated a separate administration in 1939, which lasted until 1942.

During the independence era, the Druzes continued to affect Syrian politics. In the early years, they supported politicians who leaned toward unity with **Transjordan** because of the ties forged between its **Hashemite** ruler, Abdallah, and a number of Druze leaders. In 1947, President **Shukri al-Quwwatli** tried to break Druze autonomist tendencies by inciting a peasant uprising against the landlord families that traditionally opposed central authority; however, the powerful Atrash clan rallied its loyal supporters to quell the peasant rising. In March 1949, **Husni al-Za'im** seized power with support from the Druzes in return for a pledge to follow policies to their liking,

but when he did not fulfill his promise, they began to plot against him. Za'im then dispatched an armored battalion to Jabal Druze, a move that quickened efforts that led to his overthrow in August. The Druzes also played a significant part in the 1954 overthrow of **Adib al-Shishakli** by launching a revolt against him in January. The last manifestation of traditional Druze autonomy is the existence of a separate set of personal status laws for the community. They have not played a significant role in the **Syrian Uprising**, with some supporting the regime and others joining the opposition.

DUBA, ALI (1933–). Head of military intelligence, the most powerful and strategically sensitive of Syria's several **security forces**, from 1974 to 2000. This made Duba one of the most powerful figures in the regime of **Hafiz al-Asad**. Like most other members of that regime, he hailed from modest circumstances. He was born in a small **Alawi** village near **Latakia** and joined the **Ba'th Party** in high school. Given the nature of the position, Duba is known to have participated in some of the most crucial episodes in the Asad regime's history, including the **Hama** uprising of 1982 and the confrontation between President Asad and his brother **Rif'at al-Asad**. Duba's power exceeded the narrow definition of military intelligence. He sat on government committees that advised the prime minister on economic and administrative matters, and he also handled sensitive political missions. In 1984, he contacted **Muslim Brotherhood** leaders in European exile to arrange their amnesty in exchange for public renunciation of their previous involvement in armed insurrection.

Duba's abrupt removal from office in February 2000 caught Syria watchers by surprise. The move reportedly came at the behest of **Bashar al-Asad**. Observers speculated that Bashar took that step, with his father's approval, to remove a possible challenger to his place as successor. A second interpretation held that Bashar was pursuing his anticorruption campaign because for years there had been rumors linking Duba to suspect deals. In retrospect, Duba's dismissal appears to have been the first step in a broader shake-up of powerful veteran members of the ruling elite that in March continued to pave the way for Bashar's succession in July 2000, weeks after his father's death.

E

ECONOMIC REFORM. During the early 1980s, sluggish economic performance, large budget expenditures for defense, and a drop in foreign financial assistance and remittances from Syrian workers in Arab Gulf countries contributed to an acute economic crisis that struck in 1985–1986. The most dangerous aspect of this crisis was the near exhaustion of foreign exchange reserves. Since that time, the Syrian government has adopted measures to reform the state-dominated **economy**.

In contrast to **Egypt's** more sweeping program of economic liberalization, Syria's economic reform has been cautious, controlled, and intermittent. Twenty-five years after the first steps to expand private-sector opportunities, the government and **public-sector** companies remained dominant, and the well-known inefficiencies of such economies continued to inhibit growth. The major reason for the regime's refusal to embrace a structural adjustment program along the lines of International Monetary Fund (IMF) recommendations was apprehension that it would pave the way to political liberalization and perhaps even a loss of power.

In 1985–1986, the government issued decrees to promote private investment in **tourism** and encourage joint **agricultural** ventures between private and public companies to cultivate crops for export to the Gulf countries. To broaden the field for private investment, a more ambitious 1991 law granted tax exemptions and relaxed restrictions on foreign exchange transactions for large capital projects that dovetailed with national economic goals. The results were modest, but reform did lead to the emergence of a newly prosperous business sector, improvements in productivity in certain areas of manufacturing and services, and, most importantly for the regime, a respite from the foreign exchange crunch of the mid-1980s. By 1990, the private sector had surpassed the public sector's contribution to capital investment, and there was no indication that the government would find natural resources inside Syria or financial resources outside the country to restore public-sector dominance.

Economic and political pressures stood in the way of further opening the economy in the 1990s, since the government was mindful of the disruptive consequences that would accompany structural readjustment. **Inflation** and unemployment would hit tens of thousands of public-sector employees and civil servants, and they comprised an essential part of the regime's political base. Nonetheless, the high rate of population growth meant that the economy needed to create more than 250,000 new jobs per year for young men and women entering the **labor force** during the first decade of the 21st century.

President **Bashar al-Asad** enacted reforms to gradually liberalize the Syrian economy and transition to a social market model that emphasizes both the development of a free market and social welfare. In 2001, he eliminated Syria's four-tier **currency** exchange system, which allowed the Syrian pound to be converted into dollars at different rates, and he opened Syria to foreign **banks**. President Asad also gave business experts, economists, and business professionals more influence on the reform process. Joint business councils were created to expand international **trade**. At first, the business councils had to work through the Federation of Chambers of Commerce before government officials expanded the program to allow wider participation by enterprises in **industry, agriculture, tourism**, and shipping. The joint business councils resulted in the emergence of government businesses with private-sector participation and created a more transparent environment for investors. To simplify procedures and stimulate investment, the Syrian Investment Authority was created. The opening of Syria's first stock market, the Damascus Securities Exchange, on 10 March 2009, marked another important step in the gradual liberalization of the state-controlled economy.

Transferring government projects and operations to private firms through Public-Private Partnerships was another economic reform initiative. Government officials felt that the partnerships eliminated inefficiencies associated with public-sector bureaucracy and state funding. With support from the World Bank, IMF, and **United Nations** Development Program, Syrians turned a number of public services into independent agencies. Several ministries utilized Public-Private Partnerships to improve **transportation**, electricity, housing, health care, **education**, and agriculture sectors. They also produced tangible changes in communications and information sectors.

Trade policy shifted in the direction of free enterprise as well. Import agents lost exclusive rights to market certain goods. The government cut the number prohibited products. Syria entered a free trade agreement with Turkey. On 4 May 2010, nine years after submitting an application to join the World Trade Organization (WTO), Syria was granted observer status. Damascus then began the lengthy process of joining the WTO ranks. The initiation process entails the removal of all discriminatory trade barriers from its economic policies, including the Arab boycott against Israel that dates to 1951.

ECONOMY. To give a comparative sense of Syria's economy, the World Bank ranks it as a lower-middle-income country as measured by per capita gross domestic product (GDP). This puts it in the same category as **Jordan**, **Iran**, Tunisia, Romania, and Colombia, but a combination of high population growth rate—about 2.5 percent—and sluggish economic growth drove the nation into the lower ranks of that class by the early 2000s. Since independence, Syria's economy has gone through four main phases: capitalist (1946–1961), socialist (1961–1989), selective **economic reform** (1989–2000), and selective neoliberal reform (since 2000). During the capitalist phase, **agriculture** expanded through private investment in **water** pumps and farm machinery. Public spending assisted that expansion by extending the national **transportation** infrastructure from new Mediterranean ports to the **Jazira** region. In 1961, the **United Arab Republic** promulgated the **Socialist Decrees**, inaugurating nearly three decades of state domination of **industry**, **trade**, and finance. During the 1960s, **Ba'th Party** regimes extended those measures and deepened **land reform** to break up the old political elite's power. The socialist phase brought Soviet-style **five-year plans** and massive investment in a dam on the **Euphrates River** at **Tabqa** to boost electricity production and increase the amount of irrigated land. The creation of **public-sector** companies to manage **banks**, industries, and foreign trade had greater political benefits for the Ba'th Party regime than long-term economic advantages. The only way Syria was able to sustain economic growth for much of the socialist period was by obtaining enormous sums of aid from oil-rich Arab Gulf states and developing its own **petroleum** reserves with the assistance of Western firms. By the mid-1980s, endemic problems in the public-sector firms and **corruption** in government agencies created an economic dead end, and the government shifted toward selective opening of the economy, particularly in **tourism**, real estate, and construction.

As for the rhythm of economic growth and stagnation, the overall trend was generally upward until the mid-1980s and seesawing between spurts of growth and stretches of stagnation since then. In the 1960s, the average rate of growth was 4.5 percent, while in the 1970s, it exceeded 6 percent. The latter period had such high growth (5.5 percent from 1969–1974, 7.1 percent from 1974–1979) largely because President **Hafiz al-Asad** instituted policies to encourage foreign investment and Arab aid at the same time that Syria's own production and export of petroleum was increasing. Arab aid rose from \$50 million per year before the **October 1973 War** to \$600 million per year afterward to a peak of \$1.6 billion in 1979. Other factors that contributed to economic growth included loans and grants from the World Bank, Europe, and the **United States**, and remittances from Syrians working in Arab Gulf countries. Moreover, during this period, petroleum surpassed cotton as Syria's main export because of the rise in oil prices in 1973 and 1974.

This robust era of economic expansion ended in the mid-1980s, when the GDP shrank nearly 3 percent per year from 1983 to 1987, and 9 percent in 1987, while population growth continued at 3.8 percent per year. Part of the reason for the slowdown was a cut in financial support from Arab Gulf regimes upset by Syria's support for **Iran** against **Iraq** in the first Gulf War. Furthermore, much of the capital received in the 1970s had been invested in public-sector industries that operated with appalling inefficiency. When a severe crisis hit the country's foreign exchange, these industries lacked the capital to import parts and equipment necessary to continue operation. Consequently, in the mid-1980s, production at several factories came to a complete stop. The Asad regime responded to this distress by introducing measures to slowly liberalize the economy, including gradual moves that allowed the private sector to import goods that had previously been restricted to state companies and that made it easier for foreign companies to invest. The result was a recovery in economic growth at a rate of 6 percent in the early 1990s, before slowing again in the last years of the decade, when there were three consecutive years of recession.

The first years of the 21st century saw a modest recovery stimulated by steady petroleum prices, favorable weather, and gradual opening to foreign investment and trade, especially with the **European Union**. The overall economic picture in the first decade of **Bashar al-Asad's** rule was mixed, with gains in tourism and foreign trade, but huge swaths of society, especially the working class and rural poor, encountered hardship due to a terrible drought that devastated the agrarian sector. **Inflation** in the prices of basic goods struck the poor disproportionately as well. Asad's government emphasized the need for expanding the reach of economic reform, but its achievements in that area were fairly modest in its first decade, making the greatest impact in banking and finance, in particular attracting much higher levels of foreign direct investment, while showing no improvement in corruption and public-sector efficiency. In 2010, Syria was tied for last place in a ranking of Arab economies' competitiveness.

The **Syrian Uprising** has severely damaged the economy. In the first year alone, losses from economic sanctions topped \$4 billion, and tourism plummeted. The country experienced fuel shortages, foreign **currency** reserves were halved, the value of the Syrian pound dropped by two-thirds, and inflation reached at least 50 percent by the end of 2012. Unemployment rose to 20 percent. The World Bank estimated that the economy contracted by 3 percent in 2011 and 20 percent in 2012. *See also* ENERGY; GHAB; LABOR FORCE AND UNEMPLOYMENT; MINING.

EDUCATION. During the 18th century, European missions established schools in various parts of Syria, including the Lazarist school that opened in **Damascus** in 1775. These tended to attract Syrian **Christians**. The spread of

foreign mission schools received a boost during the **Egyptian** occupation in the 1830s. The Egyptians also opened the first public schools, but they closed with the restoration of **Ottoman** rule in 1840. A thorough program to modernize education in Syria was first implemented under the terms of the Ottoman Empire's 1869 law, which provided for the establishment of a system of elementary, intermediate, secondary, and high schools. One purpose of the new educational system was to oppose the influence of mission schools, which tended to inculcate loyalty to the nation sponsoring the school, usually **France** or **Great Britain**. The era of higher public education dawned in Syria in 1903, when the Ottoman Medical School was founded in Damascus. The following year, a military preparatory school was opened in the city. During the brief rule of **Amir Faysal**, the Damascus Law Faculty was founded in 1919.

During the **French Mandate** era, there were government schools and private foreign schools operated by **Catholic** orders, namely the Jesuits and Dominicans. Government schools reached beyond their limited elite clientele of the late Ottoman era to embrace youths from urban middle-class families. In 1923, Syrian University was founded in Damascus by combining the law and medicine faculties. For the most part, however, the French invested little in education; consequently, upon achieving independence, Syria had a high rate of illiteracy and a low proportion of youths in schools.

Since independence in 1946, Syrian governments of various stripes have devoted large portions of the budget to educational development: 13.4 percent from 1946 to 1949, 14.5 percent from 1956 to 1959, and 18.6 percent from 1975 to 1982. This expenditure has not only made primary and secondary education widely available, but it also established adult literacy programs and vocational training. Primary education is free and mandatory through the sixth year; secondary education is also free, but not compulsory. Primary and secondary education is under the authority of the Ministry of Education; postsecondary education is the responsibility of the Ministry of Higher Education.

To qualify for entrance to a university, Syrians must pass a national examination upon the completion of secondary school. One's admittance to a particular faculty depends on one's score on that exam. Those with the highest scores may attend the Faculty of Medicine. Other preferred faculties include pharmacy, dentistry, engineering, and commerce. Attendance at university is tuition free. In 1958, Syrian University was renamed the University of Damascus. In the early 1980s, it had approximately 75,000 students. The second-oldest center of higher learning is the University of **Aleppo**, which grew out of the Faculty of Engineering, established in 1946, and it became an independent university in 1958 with the addition of the Faculty of **Agriculture**. By the early 1980s, it had about 30,000 students. Two smaller univer-

sities have been established by the **Ba`th Party** regime of **Hafiz al-Asad**, including Tishrin University at **Latakia** (founded in 1971) and Ba`th University at **Homs** (founded in 1979).

The general tendency during the independence period has been for the state to take over education. Private religious and foreign schools founded in the 19th century remained open, but their importance diminished with the rapid expansion of public schools. In 1967, the Neo-Ba`thist regime extended state control over all schools when it gave the Ministry of Education supervision of private schools. This regime also placed greater emphasis on technical and scientific elements in the curriculum. Agricultural schools were established at the secondary-education level. New institutions include the Veterinary Institute in **Hama** and the Electrical and Petrochemical Engineering Institute in Homs.

The Ba`thist regimes directed a greater share of the budget to education, with the result that during the 1960s, the number of students at secondary schools rose from 140,000 to 480,000; the number of teachers grew from 6,000 to 28,000; and the number of such schools increased from 400 to 1,150. As for primary education, by 1971, 63 percent of children were in schools (80 percent of boys, 47 percent of girls), but a shortage of qualified teachers has hampered the expansion of education. In spite of these gains, illiteracy has remained high. In 1960, 60 percent of the population was still illiterate, 43 percent of men and 77 percent of women, of whom 94 percent were illiterate in rural areas. Nonetheless, the proportion of girl pupils in primary schools rose from 29 percent in 1946 to 34 percent in 1969, while the percentage of girls in secondary schools stayed at 24 percent. By the early 1990s, the illiteracy rate had fallen to 36 percent, 22 percent among males and 49 percent among females. Twenty years later, total enrollment in primary education was 99.5 percent of the age group, and the primary completion rate was 103.6 percent (the primary completion rate can exceed 100 percent due to underage or overage individuals who enter early or late or repeat grades). The literacy rate stood at about 94.4 percent. Syria's education system was also doing well in terms of gender equality. According to the **United Nations** Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization's 2011 report, the female-to-male ratio for enrollment in primary education was 0.95. For secondary education, the ratio was 0.99, and for Syria's literacy rate, the ratio was 0.86. *See also* IBRAHIM PASHA (1789–1848).

EGYPT. When Syria became independent, Egypt's primary concern was to keep it out of any union plans proposed by the **Hashemite** rulers of **Jordan** and **Iraq**. In the inter-Arab contest for influence over Syria, Egypt tended to side with **Saudi Arabia**, which also sought to contain Hashemite ambitions. When the Cold War impinged on the Middle East in the mid-1950s, Egyptian president Gamal Abd al-Nasser supported Syrians inclined to adopt a neutral

foreign policy; therefore, Egypt and Saudi Arabia proposed a military alliance with Syria in March 1955 to counterbalance the **Baghdad Pact's** pro-Western alliance of Iraq and **Turkey**. This was the first official step in bringing Egypt and Syria closer together as the vanguard of Arab neutralism. The first steps toward Syrian–Egyptian unity were taken in July 1957, when Foreign Minister **Salah al-Din al-Bitar** traveled to Cairo for talks. During the crisis in Syrian relations with the **United States** from August to October 1957, Egypt dispatched 2,000 soldiers as a gesture of solidarity against Western pressures on the neutralist government. The upshot of the crisis was a sense of even greater urgency to unite with Egypt, if only to defend Syria against Western pressures coming from the United States, Turkey, and Iraq. On 1 February 1958, Syria and Egypt merged in the **United Arab Republic (UAR)**; however, Egyptian domination of the UAR generated widespread discontent in Syria, and, in September 1961, Syria seceded from the union.

Syria and Egypt then entered a period of hostile relations as the two governments blamed one another for the failure of the UAR. An improvement in relations appeared possible following the **March 8, 1963 Coup**, but the **Ba`th Party's** purge of Nasserists from the army and government ensured the continuation of poor relations. When the **Neo-Ba`th** came to power in 1966 and backed a series of provocative raids on **Israel** by **Palestinian guerrillas**, Nasser tried to increase his influence on Syria's actions by arranging a defense pact, and the two countries exchanged ambassadors for the first time since the formation of the UAR in 1958. But Nasser's inept handling of a military crisis with Israel in May 1967 led to the **June 1967 War**, in which both Egypt and Syria lost territory. For the next three years, Syrian–Egyptian relations again soured because of Egypt's acceptance of **United Nations Resolution 242** as a basis for resolving the conflict with Israel, while Syria rejected the measure.

In the autumn of 1970, important changes in leadership occurred in both countries. Nasser died and Anwar Sadat succeeded him as president of Egypt, and **Hafiz al-Asad** seized power in the **Corrective Movement**. The two new leaders strove to improve relations, and they cooperated in devising plans for a surprise attack on Israel. This resulted in the **October 1973 War**, a unique instance of coordinated Arab military action against Israel. After the war, however, Sadat took Egypt on a separate course of disengagement from the conflict, and once again its relations with Syria were marked by serious strains. These tensions completely ruptured when Sadat made a separate peace with Israel in 1979. Syria then severed relations and embarked on a military buildup to confront Israel alone.

Largely because of the war between **Iran** and Iraq, Egypt gradually restored its ties with Arab governments in the mid-1980s. When the war ended in Iraq's favor in July 1988, Syria was isolated in the Arab world for its support of Iran. To improve its regional position, Syria renewed relations

with Egypt at the end of 1989. The extent of the Syrian–Egyptian rapprochement was evident in their agreement to send troops to Saudi Arabia in 1990 in response to Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait and in Syria’s assent to attend the **Madrid Conference** of December 1991.

During the 1990s, the two countries maintained correct but cool relations. The chief point of friction remained Egypt’s peace treaty with Israel. Syria drew closer to Cairo after the election of Israel’s Benjamin Netanyahu in May 1996 augured the suspension of peace talks. Efforts to knit together a coalition of Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia, and Iran to confront Israel faltered because of Egypt’s close ties with the United States.

After **Bashar al-Asad** became president, relations worsened due to Egypt’s refusal to support **Hizballah** in the **Lebanese War of 2006**. President Asad denounced the leaders of Egypt and other Arab states. In turn, Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia boycotted **Damascus**. The 2008 Israeli war in Gaza further damaged Syrian–Egyptian ties because they backed different groups in the Palestinian movement, with Egypt supporting Fatah in the West Bank and Syria supporting **Hamas** in Gaza. Egyptian president Husni Mubarak was hostile toward Hamas because of its ties with the Egyptian branch of the **Muslim Brotherhood**, one of the main opposition groups to his presidency. In addition, he was concerned that a Hamas victory would enable Iran to extend its influence to Egypt’s border with Gaza.

In February 2011, mass protests throughout Egypt led to the ouster of Mubarak and the start of a long political transition in which the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood would play a major role. During the **Syrian Uprising**, Egypt supported an Arab League mission to implement a cease-fire and monitor the violence with observers. Cairo also served as a meeting place for Syrian opposition groups seeking the overthrow of the Asad regime.

EISENHOWER DOCTRINE. An American policy announced on 5 January 1957, to commit U.S. military power to defend any Middle Eastern country against external or internal communist subversion. American fear of communist influence in the Arab world increased with the decline of British and **French** power in the aftermath of the 1956 Suez War. Furthermore, the Soviet Union had succeeded in deepening its relations with **Egypt** and Syria in the previous two years. Syria immediately rejected the doctrine’s assumption that any Arab country was threatened by communist takeover. There followed several months of worsening relations with the **United States**, climaxed by the August expulsion of three U.S. diplomats for allegedly plotting a coup d’état. Syrian fears of an American plot persisted until October, when **Saudi Arabia** initiated a successful diplomatic campaign to reduce tensions.

EMERGENCY LAW. On 22 December 1962, the Syrian government passed the Emergency Law, under which the government assumed the power to **cancel** and shut down publications, intercept mail communications, prevent public gatherings, and arrest individuals on charges of threatening state security and public order. Individuals charged under the law were to be tried by exceptional military courts created by the law.

When the **Ba`th Party** first seized power in the **March 8, 1963 Coup**, its ruling organ, the **National Revolutionary Command Council (NRCC)**, declared a state of emergency and activated the Emergency Law. The NRCC disregarded the law's stipulation that a state of emergency must be ratified by the council of ministers and parliament. Moreover, the law stipulated that a state of emergency could only be invoked at time of war, with the threat of war looming, or following general catastrophe, although Ba`thist regimes repeatedly justified the continuation of the state of emergency by claiming that Syria was in a state of war with **Israel**.

Subsequent decrees supplemented the Emergency Law with such vaguely defined political crimes as giving offense to socialism and **Arab nationalism**. In 1968, a decree established state security courts to try cases under the Emergency Law without reference to Syrian civil codes of procedure and evidence. Trials held by state security courts were closed, and verdicts could not be appealed; judges were appointed by the president and seldom had legal training, the sole qualification being loyalty to the regime. Even with the sweeping powers granted by the Emergency Law, the **security forces** increasingly arrogated the authority to arrest, interrogate, and imprison Syrians without referring to the law or the state security courts.

In the late 1970s, opposition to the Emergency Law played a part in the nationwide unrest that threatened **Hafiz al-Asad's** grip on power. After his death in 2000, **civil society** activists made lifting the state of emergency, abolishing the state security courts, and repealing the Emergency Law central parts of their efforts to get **Bashar al-Asad** to liberalize the regime. It was only under the enormous pressure of the **Syrian Uprising** that he canceled the law in April 2011; however, opposition activists noted that a series of presidential decrees justifying the suppression of political expression meant that the fundamental problem of unchecked state power remained.

ENERGY. One of the most notable achievements of Syria's Ba`thist regimes was the extension of electrical power to most parts of the country, connecting nearly the entire population to the national power grid. The problem for the government, which controlled the generation and distribution of power since the early 1960s, was how to increase the supply of energy to meet the demands of a young and growing population. In the early 1990s, observers estimated demand at 2,500 megawatts, but had a capacity of only 1,900 megawatts. Consequently, Syrians had to cope with chronic electricity

cuts. Part of the problem was that planners overestimated the capacity of the country's major hydroelectric project at the **Tabqa Dam** on the **Euphrates River**. Instead of generating 800 megawatts per day, in the early 1990s, its capacity was a mere 150 megawatts, and average daily output even less. While government officials dodged blame by accusing **Turkey** of diverting Euphrates River **water** for its own energy and agricultural needs, foreign observers considered inferior maintenance at Tabqa to be the primary cause of shortfalls in electricity generation.

In 1993, energy's centrality to **industrial** production and even political stability prompted President **Hafiz al-Asad** to intervene and break through the typical bureaucratic knots that obstructed effective measures. The private sector was permitted to participate in efforts to increase production, and the government solicited Arab and Japanese funds to finance the construction of new generators. Syria also joined a regional effort to knit together the electricity grids of Turkey, **Iraq**, **Lebanon**, **Jordan**, and **Egypt** designed to make it possible to match demand and supply.

Under **Bashar al-Asad**, efforts to boost energy supply included steps to broaden the scope of private investment. In 2010, parliament opened the electricity sector to private investment. These investments could be in partnership with the Syrian government or solely owned by the investing company, but the government would still retain control of the price of electricity generation. In addition, Syria attempted to diversify energy sources by increasing incentives for investment in renewable energy projects.

Population and economic growth continued to ensure that energy supplies would constantly fall short of demand, which increased by about 10 percent per year in the 2000s and reached 44.5 billion kilowatts in 2009. At the time, the number of people on the national grid was expected to increase by 5 million in five years. The disruption to governance and destruction of infrastructure (electricity transmission and oil pipelines) wrought by the **Syrian Uprising** threw off all planning in the energy sector and exacerbated the country's chronic energy supply problems. Many ordinary Syrians felt the effects of fuel and electricity shortages, as blackouts become a part of daily life. The government implemented a rationing program in areas under its control, while it routinely cut power to rebellious villages, towns, and urban neighborhoods to punish protesters.

ENVIRONMENT. As in most parts of the developing world, shifts in the population and **economy** have degraded the environment. The imperative to feed a growing population has spurred efforts to intensify cultivation in semi-arid regions, primarily by irrigating more land. Inadequate drainage of irrigated fields raised the soil's salinity and rendered large tracts uncultivable. The desert spread and arable land decreased due to overgrazing, cutting of

trees, and the utilization of off-road motor vehicles to shepherd livestock. Efforts to restore rangeland had no success because they did not address the basic imbalance between the number of animals and available pasture.

The Syrian coast has a special set of environmental problems. As the population and economic activities grew in **Latakia**, **Baniyas**, and **Tartus**, a higher volume of **industrial**, **agricultural**, and human waste spoiled the Mediterranean Sea's marine environment. In terms of economic production, such pollution hurt the fisheries sector. In general, the urban environment worsened as well. Migration from rural areas and natural growth fostered overcrowding in major cities and put pressure on sanitation facilities. Industry and motor vehicles are sources of air pollution.

Official recognition of the need to monitor and remedy environmental problems was evident in the 1979 appointment of a minister of state for environmental affairs. Perhaps the most important agency for mitigating environmental harm is the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA), based at **Aleppo**. ICARDA operates projects to reclaim semiarid zones and introduce sustainable grazing patterns. International bodies like the World Bank also play a role in fostering regulations and administrative commitment to introducing local procedures to stem environmental degradation.

EUPHRATES RIVER. This waterway runs through Syria for 670 kilometers between the borders of **Turkey** and **Iraq** and provides 80 percent of Syria's **water**. The Euphrates' total length is 2,333 kilometers. About 90 percent of its water comes from streams in Turkey, and its flow decreases near the border with Syria. The level of the Euphrates fluctuates sharply between high levels reached between November and May and low levels during the hot season. Before modern times, settlement along the river was sparse, the region being dominated by the **Bedouin**, but beginning in the late **Ottoman** era, central government authority was extended by posting garrisons and developing towns around them. This process facilitated **agricultural** colonization and the settlement of most Bedouin. **Al-Raqqa** and **Dayr al-Zur** are the main towns along the river, with populations of approximately 250,000 and 200,000, respectively.

Since independence, Syrian planners have developed projects to more fully exploit the river for **energy** and agriculture. The **Tabqa Dam** was built on the Euphrates between 1968 and 1973. It increased the amount of land that could be irrigated and generated most of Syria's electrical power. The **Jazira** region depends heavily on the river and its major tributary, the **Khabur River**. Such Cities as al-Raqqa, Dayr al-Zur, **al-Hasaka**, and **Aleppo** draw from the Euphrates for municipal use, and the surrounding region's agricultural production is completely dependent on it.

The river's prominence in the national **economy** is the major reason for tensions with Turkey and Iraq. Because the river rises in Turkey, it controls the volume of flow downriver. If Turkey uses too much water, the level of **Lake Asad** behind the Tabqa Dam drops too low to operate the dam's eight turbines. By the same token, when Syria draws more from the Euphrates, less water flows into Iraq. In the 1970s, Turkey began work on a massive hydraulic scheme, the Southeast Anatolia Development Project, or GAP, to construct a series of enormous dams to provide power and irrigation. The GAP irrigation projects would cut the river's flow into Syria by one-third. Furthermore, the smaller flow might contain higher levels of pollution because the river could carry Turkey's agricultural and **industrial** waste. It is possible that Turkey's and Syria's economic development plans will not result in either shortage or pollution, but that anxieties about water security will remain. Water sharing is also a sore subject in Syria's relations with Iraq. In 1975, Baghdad accused **Damascus** of harming its economy when Syria filled Lake Asad and temporarily cut the river's flow from 15 to 9.5 billion cubic meters. Mediation by the Soviet Union and the **League of Arab States** lowered bilateral tensions. In 1990, the two countries agreed on an allocation of water, whereby Syria promised Iraq about 60 percent of the Euphrates' flow entering Syria from Turkey.

EUROPEAN UNION (EU). Before the outbreak of the **Syrian Uprising** in 2011, a large portion of Syria's **trade** was with EU members. In 2000, more than half of Syria's exports went to EU markets, and approximately 30 percent of its imports came from EU members. By 2011, the EU was Syria's largest trading partner, with total trade valued at 7 billion euros. The EU provided technical and financial assistance in several fields, including irrigation and drainage on the **Euphrates River**, urban **water** supply in **Hama**, modernization of **banking**, and technical training. In 2001, the EU and Syria signed an agreement covering management of electricity production, the establishment of a new business school, **tourism** development, and telecommunications. Assistance took the form of training, funds, and such equipment as new computers. The various projects were shaped to encourage **economic reform**, especially the development of a robust private sector. In spite of the positive efforts on both sides, trade relations were not free of friction. For example, the EU accused Syria of dumping textile manufactures. On the other hand, Syria again became eligible for loans from the European Investment Bank at the end of 2000 by paying off debts it owed to Germany.

Syria and the EU pursued an Association Agreement that, if ratified, would open a new chapter in their political and economic ties. The agreement aimed to facilitate political dialogue and liberalize trade between EU member states and Syria. Negotiations for the agreement began in 1998 and continued until 2004, when an official draft was produced. Political strains ensuing

from the **Rafiq al-Hariri assassination** in 2005 caused a five-year pause in discussions of the draft agreement. In October 2009, minor adjustments were made to the proposal, taking into account developments since the suspension of talks. Syrian officials then requested more time to examine the contract and its potential economic consequences since the Syrian **economy** lacked the competitiveness and diversity of other member states, making it vulnerable to a loss in income, employment, and foreign direct investment flows.

The Syrian Uprising has completely disrupted relations between the **Bashar al-Asad** regime and the EU. In response to the brutal crackdown on dissidents and demonstrators, the EU implemented sanctions on Syrian business, the banking sector, and oil companies. The sanctions on oil companies were especially damaging since 95 percent of Syrian oil was consumed by Europe. Some European states began to openly back opposition groups, and, in 2012, some European countries broke diplomatic relations with Syria in response to the escalating violence. *See also* FOREIGN POLICY.

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FAMILY. Kinship ties play a central but variable role in the lives of Syrians. The common image of the extended multigenerational Arab family living in a single domicile, arranged marriage at a young age to a cousin, and many children represents at most a cultural ideal and almost certainly not historical reality for most Syrians through the ages. Nonetheless, an individual's kinship ties have weighed heavily in determining livelihood, place of residence, and personal interactions. **Islamic** civilization generally achieved a high degree of social and spatial mobility when compared to premodern societies in Europe, South Asia, and **China**. Yet, it is still probably the case that most Syrians before modern times were born, grew up, and died in the same village or town or with the same **Bedouin** clan; that the selection of a spouse occurred through networks of close relations; and that livelihood as cultivator, merchant, artisan, or scribe passed from one generation to the next within families.

It is not possible to describe in much detail the history of the family in Syria because historical research on the subject is a new field of inquiry and, thus far, the results must be considered preliminary findings. The most developed field of inquiry is family life in **Ottoman** cities, where it is evident that kinship groups had important political, economic, and social functions. Certain families established multigenerational "dynasties" in such specific fields of activity as religious prestige, political service to Istanbul, and participation in long-distance **trade**. These families comprised a compact, conspicuous elite and usually possessed the material resources to attain the ideal of multigenerational families inhabiting a large common domicile or adjoining residences. Such notable lineages used marriage to preserve their wealth and sustain alliances. Research in law court records in Syrian towns have shown that monogamy was the norm since at least the 18th century.

In modern times, various forces have altered family dynamics in Syria. Urbanization has divided families between rural and urban branches and made it rare for extended families to live together. Economic change has created opportunities for livelihoods in professions and large-scale organizations, including government offices, **industrial** enterprises, and commercial

firms. The government's assumption of welfare functions in **education**, **health**, and employment has created new options for Syrians in need of such services. The effects of these changes are uneven. For example, it is clear that rural Syrians tend to marry at a younger age and have more children than city dwellers. Furthermore, the notion that modernization would marginalize the family is mistaken. Instead, the family has evolved and adapted to new circumstances. Thus, it is common for Syrians to tap family connections to gain access to jobs and public services. According to modern norms, such behavior constitutes nepotism (**corruption**), but for many, if not most, Syrians, it represents loyalty to a higher value, the family. *See also* ASAD, AL-; MAKHLUF.

FARZAT, ALI (1951–). Born in **Hama**, Farzat is one of the foremost political cartoonists in the Arab world. The artist has won numerous awards for his daring and clever illustrations and participated in art exhibits in **France**, **Russia**, and Germany. His controversial drawings have been banned in nations like **Iraq**, **Jordan**, and Libya, and even been outlawed in Syria. He attended the Faculty of Fine Arts at the University of **Damascus**.

Farzat rose to prominence in the late 1970s with his eloquent uncaptioned pictures. He established a repertoire of stock images to express his messages. Those images include medals for military leaders' phony claims to valor and heroism, as well as ornate desks for **corrupt**, incompetent bureaucrats. His popularity was once such that when an official Syrian **newspaper** dropped his cartoons because they were deemed too critical, circulation plummeted, and the newspaper resumed carrying his work. Farzat made a bit of history in February 2001, when he received permission to publish Syria's first private periodical since the **Ba`th Party** first seized power in 1963. The *Lamplighter* (*al-Dumari*) was a weekly magazine dedicated to political satire. The first issue quickly sold out all 25,000 copies. It was reported that readers were interested less in reading the articles than viewing the cartoons, which lampooned official corruption and military officers' abuses of power. The political opening under **Bashar al-Asad** proved ephemeral, and, in June 2001, Farzat encountered pressures to stop publishing because of an article about Prime Minister **Muhammad Miru**. Nonetheless, Farzat managed to keep the enterprise alive in the face of diminishing circulation and mixed signals from the regime.

At the start of the **Syrian Uprising**, Farzat published cartoons satirizing the Asad regime. One notable cartoon showed Bashar al-Asad standing with a suitcase as Muammar Gaddafi arrives in a vehicle for them to flee the wave of Arab uprisings. In August 2011, Farzat was kidnapped by masked gunmen as he left his studio in the morning. They beat him until he was bruised and bleeding. The guards then broke his hands as a warning before dumping him along the side of a road. Images of the cartoonist lying in a hospital bed with

patches covering his face sparked new momentum among protesters outraged at the government's brutal behavior. In a series of cartoons published shortly before the attack, the artist mocked Asad's belated announcements of reform by depicting a politician with rosebuds in his mouth and a turd on his head.

FATAT, AL-. The Young Arab Society (*al-Jam'iyya al-arabiyya al-fatat*) was a secret society organized by Arab students in Paris, in 1911, to promote Arabs' rights in the **Ottoman Empire**. In 1913, al-Fatat members in Paris convened an Arab Congress to advance their demands with the support of other groups for greater Arab autonomy in the provinces. During **World War I**, al-Fatat abandoned its original program and began to strive for Arab independence from the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of a unitary state in Arab provinces of the empire. The group secretly met with **Amir Faysal** in 1915 and supported the **Hashemite-led Arab Revolt** that broke out the following year. When Faysal established his Arab government in 1918, members of al-Fatat played a leading role as government officials, military officers, and members of his staff. Many members of al-Fatat went on to become nationalist leaders during the **French Mandate** era.

FATIMID DYNASTY. **Isma'ili Shi'i** dynasty founded by Ubayd Allah that first rose in North Africa (present-day Tunisia) in 909. After conquering **Egypt** in 969, they fought with fellow Isma'ili **Qarmatis** based in Bahrain for control over southern Syria. The Fatimids consolidated their authority in **Damascus** in 983, and then contended with the **Hamdanids** for supremacy in the north. For a century, the Fatimids ruled southern Syria and wavered between direct rule and accommodation to other powers' influence in northern Syria. Thus, they coexisted with the Hamdanids and **Mirdasids**. In Damascus, the Fatimids began the practice of installing **Turkish** garrisons to maintain order in the city and its environs. When the Fatimids attempted to rule northern Syria, they came into conflict with the **Byzantines** on several occasions in the late 10th and early 11th centuries. Because of the Byzantines' greater military power, the Fatimids sometimes acquiesced to the emperor's claim on **Aleppo** and the rest of northern Syria as tributaries.

One of the curious episodes of Fatimid history involves the caliph al-Hakim (r. 996–1021), certainly one of the most eccentric rulers in **Islamic** history and the focal point for the development of the **Druze** religion. His reign was notable for other aspects. Early Fatimid policy toward **Jews** and **Christians** had been markedly tolerant to the extent that a number of high posts were assigned to them. In contrast, al-Hakim persecuted non-Muslims, seized their properties, and destroyed churches. In 1009, he outraged Christians in the Middle East and Europe by having the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem demolished. Four years later, he relaxed restrictions

on Christians and Jews, for he frequently reversed policies. Among his constructive acts was the establishment of a special institute for the study of Shi'i doctrines and to train Isma'ili propagandists. Al-Hakim also succeeded in extending direct Fatimid authority to Aleppo for the first time in 1017. The Mirdasids took the city six years later, but for the next five decades, they usually acknowledged Fatimid suzerainty. Also in 1017, the first signs of a new religion appeared among Isma'ili propagandists suggesting that al-Hakim was not merely the **imam**, but also the divine incarnation. This teaching angered not only **Sunnis**, but also traditional Isma'ilis, and early Druze teachers came under attack in Egypt. After al-Hakim's disappearance in 1021, Druze missionaries left Egypt to spread the religion in Syria.

Soon after al-Hakim's reign, Fatimid power in Syria began to wane as local forces challenged the Isma'ili **caliphate** and bands of **Turkomen** migrated into Syria. To complicate matters for the Fatimids, their own garrisons in Syrian towns were riven with feuds between Turkish and Berber factions. In 1076, a Turkoman chief who had served the Fatimids in campaigns against **Bedouin** tribes revolted and seized Damascus. Three years later, the Turkoman handed power over to the new great power of the region, the **Saljuk** Turks, thereby ending a century of Fatimid preeminence in Syria.

FAYSAL IBN HUSAYN AL-HASHIMI (1885–1933). A son of Sharif **Husayn ibn Ali**, leader of the **Arab Revolt** against the **Ottoman Empire** during **World War I**, and ruler of a short-lived independent Syrian state from October 1918 until July 1920. A year before the outbreak of the Arab Revolt, Faysal, a native of Mecca in western Arabia, visited **Damascus**, where he forged the basis for cooperation with members of the secret **Arab nationalist** society **al-Fatat**. When the revolt broke out a year later, Faysal led Arab forces on their march into Syria and entered Damascus in October 1918. He then established a provisional military government supported by his wartime Arab nationalist allies, as well as subsidies and diplomatic backing from **Great Britain**. Faysal's nascent state was nonetheless vulnerable to **French** pressures. Moreover, he came to Syrian politics as an outsider and therefore lacked a solid political base. His efforts to secure Syrian independence by attending the Paris Peace Conference in 1918–1919 were ultimately futile because of France's insistence on establishing direct control over the interior. Faysal's fate was sealed in November 1919, when British troops began to withdraw from Syria, leaving the way open to French occupation.

Faysal convened the **Syrian Congress** in March 1920. The congress formally declared Syria's independence, proclaimed Faysal king of Syria, and formed a government under a prime minister appointed by Faysal. He then tried to negotiate with France and offered to recognize its primary standing among foreign powers in Syria, but his willingness to compromise Arab sovereignty undermined his position among nationalists at home. When

French troops invaded, the outmatched Syrian forces resisted at the **Battle of Maysalun**, near Damascus, on 24 July 1920. The French commander drove Faysal out of Damascus, and, on 1 August, he left Syria, although he did later become king of **Iraq**. While Faysal's brief rule is primarily known for its tumultuous politics, a number of notable cultural institutions, including a museum and a scientific academy, were established as an expression of Syria's increasingly Arab nationalist culture.

FEBRUARY 23, 1966 COUP. This coup by the **Neo-Ba`th** against the first Ba`thist regime brought to power Syria's most radical government. It was precipitated by a heightening in the power struggle between the **Ba`th Party's** old guard and younger factions. On 21 February, supporters of the old guard in the army ordered the transfer of their rivals. Two days later, the **Military Committee**, backing the younger factions, launched a coup that entailed bloody fighting in **Aleppo, Damascus, Dayr al-Zur, and Latakia**. As a result of the rebellion, the party's historical founders fled the country and spent the rest of their lives in exile. The coup also created a permanent schism between Syrian and **Iraqi** branches of the party.

FERTILE CRESCENT PLAN. An **Iraqi Hashemite** plan for the union of Iraq with Syria, **Lebanon, Palestine, and Transjordan**. Iraq's prime minister, Nuri al-Sa'id, broached the plan to British officials during **World War II**, when it appeared that **France** had become too weak to hold on to Syria. This Arab unity scheme faced opposition from those Syrians who did not wish to live under a monarchy or enter a pro-British alliance. During the independence period, the Iraqi government poured money into the pockets of Syrian politicians who favored unity. In addition, the second **People's Party**, representing northern Syrian commercial and landholding interests, favored the Fertile Crescent Plan and initiated diplomatic steps to implement it. On the other hand, the **National Party** and factions in the Syrian Army were determined to block any plans for unity with Iraq as long as it had a military treaty with **Great Britain**. The closest the plan came to fruition was during the regime of Colonel **Sami al-Hinnawi** (August–December 1949), who had installed a People's Party government that entered negotiations to achieve unity. The opportunity was aborted by Colonel **Adib al-Shishakli's** coup d'état. Any remaining glimmer of hope for the Fertile Crescent Plan vanished with the overthrow of Iraq's monarchy in July 1958.

FIVE-YEAR PLANS. Syria introduced its first five-year plan for 1960 to 1965 during the **United Arab Republic** period. It aimed to develop **agriculture** and **mining** resources, as well as launch construction of a railroad between **Latakia** and **al-Qamishli**, but the political turmoil of those years

hampered implementation of the plan. The second plan (1966–1970) devoted the greatest share of investment to developing the **petroleum industry** and the **Tabqa Dam** on the **Euphrates River**, which was supposed to expand the area of irrigated agriculture and generate electricity. Large sums also went to **transportation**, communications, public works, and housing. The third five-year plan (1971–1975) sought to complete the Tabqa Dam and further develop industrial production and **energy** resources. Endemic problems in achieving the plans' goals shaped the fourth plan (1976–1980), as did shortages in agricultural products. This plan tried to revive agriculture by giving it a quarter of public investment (compared with 10 percent in the third plan). The fifth plan (1981–1985) mainly invested in finishing projects left over from previous plans and reduced investment in agriculture. Starting in the mid-1980s, the regime of **Hafiz al-Asad** had to rely more on the private sector as the engine of economic growth and diminish the state's role in the **economy**. Consequently, while a sixth plan (1986–1990) was drawn up, the regime did not try to implement it, and a seventh plan for 1991 to 1995 was never completed, marking a hiatus in centralized economic planning.

Under **Bashar al-Asad**, Syria revived five-year planning with a ninth plan (2001–2005), which included a section for empowering women and measures to monitor progress toward meeting plan goals. The focus on economic and social reforms in the tenth plan (2006–2010) accompanied a decision to strive for transition to a social market economy. Rather than depending on central planning, the tenth plan utilized market supply and demand to distribute resources efficiently. The tenth plan also sought to decentralize some decisionmaking through support for public–private partnerships and partnerships with civil society organizations and local governments. Rising poverty and low levels of investment indicated that implementation fell short of meeting the plan's goals.

Economic advisers introduced the country's eleventh five-year plan in 2011. The main objective of the new proposal was to create a more effective social-market economy. Inefficient **public-sector** companies were targeted whose performance reflected that there was a need for them to be reformed at all costs. The regime's preoccupation with the **Syrian Uprising**, however, consumed all of its resources and forced it to shelve the plan.

FLAG. Changes to the official flag reflect Syria's volatile political history. In **Hashemite** Syria, the flag consisted of horizontal bars of green, white, and black to stand for the **Fatimid**, **Umayyad**, and **Abbasid** dynasties. During the **French Mandate**, in 1932, a new flag added three red stars to the white bar. The stars represented the united provinces of **Aleppo**, **Damascus**, and **Dayr al-Zur**. Syria kept that flag until it entered the **United Arab Republic (UAR)** with **Egypt** in 1958. The UAR flag had red, white, and black bars, with two green stars representing Syria and Egypt. The 1932 flag was re-

stored after Syria withdrew from the UAR in 1961. When the **Ba`th Party** came to power in 1963, it adopted the UAR flag with three stars, the additional one representing **Iraq** because of hopes for a union of the three states. The current flag has just two stars.

FOREIGN POLICY. Since gaining independence in 1946, Syria has passed through three main phases in its foreign relations. The first period lasted until about 1970. It was notable for the ability of outside powers to meddle in its affairs to draw Syria into one orbit or another. The second period, from 1970 to 2003, was characterized by Syria's ability to deflect such manipulation and even project its influence into neighboring countries, most notably **Lebanon**. The U.S. invasion of **Iraq** in 2003 augured a more threatening climate, with the military forces of a great power along Syria's eastern border augmenting the perennial threat from **Israel** to the south. To understand the complex vicissitudes of the country's foreign relations, it helps to consider them as overlapping sets of issues in three contexts: the Arab-Israeli conflict, regional Arab politics, and superpower rivalry.

Syria's domestic instability in the 1940s and 1950s made it the object of Arab intrigue. The neighboring **Hashemite** kingdoms of **Jordan** and **Iraq** both sought to pull Syria into close alignment to oppose their **Egyptian** and **Saudi Arabian** rivals. By the same token, Cairo and Riyadh strove to ensure their position by swaying **Damascus** to support them. Consequently, Syrian foreign policy seesawed from one pole to another, but popular sentiment became increasingly pro-Egyptian, especially after President Gamal Abd al-Nasser's rise to heroic stature for defying **Great Britain** and **France** regarding the Suez Canal. Throughout the period, the **United States** and the Soviet Union worked to swing Damascus into their respective camps. In early 1958, the neutralist and pro-Egyptian impulse prevailed with the creation of the **United Arab Republic (UAR)**, and, for the next three years, Syria did not have an independent foreign policy, but notably moved closer to the Soviet Union. As for Israel, Syria's military vulnerability in the **demilitarized zones** that had emerged from **armistice** talks after the **Palestine War of 1948** meant that its leaders might occasionally make bellicose pronouncements, but they lacked the means to back them up, and the armistice remained in place.

After the breakup of the UAR, Syria entered yet another prolonged stretch of volatility in its foreign relations in a more radical regional political climate. The most important change had occurred in Iraq, where the pro-Western monarchy fell in 1958, and a succession of military regimes followed. Damascus contributed to the radical mood when the **Ba`th Party** seized power in 1963, with a Pan-Arab agenda at the head of a foreign policy driven by ideology. There ensued fruitless talks with Baghdad and Cairo to forge a basis for Arab unity. Even though the Ba`thist leaders declared their desire to

attain such unity, their actions and rhetoric alienated most Arab regimes, which they viewed as either reactionary (pro-Western) or capitulationist (unwilling to go to war against Israel). By 1970, Damascus was more isolated in Arab politics than ever before.

The second key element in the Ba'th Party's foreign policy was an emphasis on the duty to liberate **Palestine** from Zionist occupation. As a result, the mid-1960s saw the development of ties between Damascus and **Palestinian** guerrilla organizations in Jordan and Lebanon. Syria's backing for guerrilla raids on Israel precipitated the May 1967 crisis that resulted in the **June 1967 War**. In that conflict, Syria lost the **Golan Heights** to Israel, and regaining that territory has been one of the foremost objectives of foreign policy ever since. The June 1967 War was also a turning point for Syria's relations with the superpowers. Damascus cut ties with Washington because of its support for Israel and drew even closer to Moscow for political and military support.

The **Corrective Movement** of 1970 marked a turn away from ideology to pragmatism, exemplified by President **Hafiz al-Asad's** collaboration with Egyptian president Anwar al-Sadat in planning the **October 1973 War**. After the war, Asad again displayed pragmatism in restoring relations with Washington, but Egyptian president Anwar Sadat's pursuit of a separate arrangement with Israel forced Asad to resort to a foreign policy of "balancing" a coalition of regional forces against Israel. Other Arab countries rallied to Syria as the main "confrontation" state facing Israel. On the one hand, this left Syria exposed to Israel's military might; on the other, it meant that Syria would receive billions of dollars in aid from Arab Gulf states. This spelled a moderation of Syria's foreign policy and its move to the center of Arab regional politics. That position, however, would be difficult to maintain after Syria's intervention in the **Lebanese Civil War** in 1976, and even more so when Syria supported **Iran** in its eight-year war with Iraq (1980–1988).

The next shift in foreign relations came in 1990, when President Hafiz al-Asad reacted to the dissolution of the Soviet Union by drawing closer to Washington and decided to support the U.S. effort to expel Iraqi forces from Kuwait. The aftermath of "Operation Desert Storm" saw Asad agree to participate in an American endeavor to achieve a comprehensive settlement to the Arab–Israeli conflict by attending the **Madrid Conference**. Throughout the 1990s, Asad pursued his main foreign policy goal of recovering the Golan Heights in the **Syrian–Israeli peace talks** sponsored by the United States. In concrete terms, Syria gained from its cooperation with the Washington coalition by receiving a new injection of financial aid from the Gulf states and obtaining implicit U.S. approval for imposing the *Pax Syriana* in Lebanon.

The new millennium brought more dangerous strategic conditions. Negotiations with the Israelis came closer than ever to clarifying the terms for a peace treaty, but the parties failed to close the deal in January 2000, in talks

held at **Shepherdstown**, West Virginia, in the United States. Then there was a dismal summit meeting at Geneva in March between Hafiz al-Asad and U.S. president Bill Clinton. Those developments turned out to be the last chapters in the prolonged peace process launched at Madrid in October 1991, as events in the next six months fundamentally altered the regional political climate. First, Israel unilaterally withdrew from Lebanon in May without negotiating a treaty with Beirut. By doing so, the Israelis removed an instrument for Damascus to apply pressure, namely guerrilla attacks on Israeli forces in Lebanon. Second, Hafiz al-Asad died in June, and his son, **Bashar al-Asad**, succeeded him and needed time to consolidate his position rather than immediately renew diplomatic efforts. Third, in July, an attempt to resolve final status issues between Israel and the Palestinians through intensive American-mediated negotiations at Camp David collapsed in an angry atmosphere of mutual recriminations. At the end of September, a Palestinian uprising broke out against Israel's occupation in the West Bank and Gaza. Finally, in January 2001, Israeli elections resulted in a victory for veteran hawk Ariel Sharon, who became the new prime minister. A little more than a year earlier, it had looked like a Syrian–Israeli peace treaty was in reach, but in the first half of 2001, that prospect was as remote as ever.

Bashar continued his father's policy of finding partners to balance Syria's more powerful Israeli adversary. He maintained close ties with Egypt and Saudi Arabia and boosted **trade** with Jordan and **Turkey**, countries that had had difficulties with Damascus in the 1990s. Bashar also deepened overtures to Baghdad begun in 1997. In response to the George W. Bush administration's appeal for assistance in the "War on Terror" in the wake of the 11 September 2001 attacks on the United States, Syria proclaimed its readiness to cooperate against Osama bin Laden's al-Qa`ida network. At the same time, Asad insisted that Palestinian attacks on Israelis were not instances of **terrorism** but acts of resistance against occupation, a position at odds with the official American view. For a while in 2002, it seemed possible that Syria might drift further into a chilly relationship with Washington regarding American belligerence toward Saddam Husayn's regime. The wish to avoid gratuitously antagonizing Washington resulted in Syria voting in favor of **United Nations** Security Council Resolution 1441 in November 2002, even though most Syrians strongly opposed an American invasion of Iraq. Syria's international position was dangerously exposed after the United States invaded and deposed the Ba`thist regime in Baghdad and warned Damascus against provocative actions.

The U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, as well as hostile rhetoric from U.S. officials, raised concerns in Syria and Iran about Washington's intentions. They both provided assistance to insurgent groups in Iraq to keep the U.S. military tied down. At the same time, Bashar sought to improve relations with the **European Union (EU)** through an Association Agreement that

would provide resources for economic growth. He also hoped that the EU could act as a diplomatic buffer against pressure from the United States. In return, the EU expected Syria to withdraw from Lebanon, reduce the size of its military, reconsider its ties with **Hizballah** and **Hamas**, and act as a mediator between Europe and Iran. The Association Agreement never came to fruition due to political and economic differences.

The **Syrian Uprising** has increased the international isolation of the Asad regime. Many European and Middle Eastern countries severed relations with Damascus after it responded to protests with harsh repression. Turkey hosted the strongest opposition groups, the **Free Syrian Army** and the **Syrian National Council**, and it took part in international sanctions that crippled the Syrian **economy**. The United States, the EU, and the Arab League also supported the opposition forces in Syria, while the Asad regime was able to count on support from Iran, **Russia**, and **China**, at least through the first two and a half years of the uprising. *See also* ARGENTINA; BRAZIL; INDIA; LATIN AMERICA; TRANSJORDAN; VENEZUELA.

FRANCE. In July 1920, French armed forces invaded Syria from **Lebanon** to impose France's rule under the terms of a mandate it had received from the League of Nations by the **San Remo Agreement** the previous April. French interests in Syria dated to the 18th century in the form of **Catholic** missions and a strong commercial presence in **Aleppo**. In the last decades of **Ottoman** rule, France became the European power with the largest economic stake in the Ottoman Empire. French companies had investments in various **transportation** projects, public utilities, financial institutions, and tobacco. During **World War I**, French and British diplomats concluded the **Sykes–Picot Agreement**, which divided the Ottoman Arab lands into spheres of influence. This plan assigned Syria (including Lebanon) to France. At the end of the war, however, British troops occupied Syria and assisted the establishment of an independent regime under **Amir Faysal**. The French suspected Britain of intentionally violating the terms of Sykes–Picot to undermine France's position in the region. There followed intense negotiations at Versailles that ended with Britain's agreement in September 1919 to withdraw its forces from Syria. Faysal tried to negotiate an arrangement with France whereby the latter would recognize Syria's independence in return for his promise to grant France exclusive control over **foreign policy** and the right to provide assistance in developing Syria's nascent military and administrative institutions, but the French government was determined to directly control Syria, so it expelled Faysal and dismantled his government in July 1920, thereby inaugurating the **French Mandate**, which would persist for nearly 26 years.

Under **Bashar al-Asad**, relations reached a low point after the assassination of Lebanese prime minister **Rafiq al-Hariri** in 2005. Relations improved after Asad lent his support to resolving a political stalemate in Lebanon in 2008. In July 2008, President Asad arrived in Paris for his first European state visit since the Hariri assassination. The visit marked the end of Syria's diplomatic isolation and signaled a thawing in relations with France. Asad attended the opening conference of a new Mediterranean Union initiative, hosted by President Nicolas Sarkozy and aimed at bolstering economic ties among European, North African, and Middle Eastern Mediterranean states. Asad engaged in diplomatic negotiations with leaders from more than 44 countries and met with Lebanese president Michel Suleiman for the first time. During the visit, Asad and Sarkozy discussed normalizing relations and paving the way for future cooperation. The trip marked one of the most significant moves by French diplomats to reintegrate **Damascus** into the international arena.

In September 2008, President Sarkozy became the first Western head of state to visit Syria since the Hariri assassination. The high profile mission signaled a victory for President Asad, who managed to survive diplomatic isolation while maintaining the nation's status as a central player in Middle East affairs. During the two-day visit, French and Syrian officials conducted a series of talks on a wide variety of subjects, including the country's **human rights** record and prospects for economic cooperation. Sarkozy expressed much enthusiasm regarding reigniting peace talks between Syria and **Israel**, demonstrating Paris's commitment to pursuing a greater role in Middle East politics.

Following President Sarkozy's state visit to Damascus, multiple agreements were authorized to establish joint business ventures in Syria's **energy** and aviation sectors. The move signaled the start of a new era of Syrian–French economic collaboration. Paris assisted Damascus in economic reforms aimed at enhancing the country's competitiveness and diversification, while simultaneously regulating monopolies and property protection. The first Syrian–French Business Council was established in May 2009, with the goal of boosting investment and **trade** between the two nations. Damascus profited from French expertise in the development of small- and medium-sized enterprises.

After the outbreak of the **Syrian Uprising**, however, France joined others in imposing sanctions against the regime and, at the end of May 2012, expelled the Syrian ambassador in response to allegations that the Syrian regime was committing atrocities against opposition groups. *See also* FRANCO-SYRIAN TREATY OF 1936; FRANKLIN-BOUILLON AGREEMENT.

FRANCO-SYRIAN TREATY OF 1936. During the **French Mandate**, Syrian nationalists came to realize that **France** would not grant Syria independence unconditionally, but that a treaty guaranteeing France's special status in the country's affairs after independence might bring about an early end to the mandate. Negotiations between an elected Syrian government under **Haqqi al-Azm** and French high commissioner Damien de Martel reached agreement in November 1933, but the Syrian Chamber of Deputies gave the draft treaty a chilly reception because it left **Jabal Druze** and the **Alawi** state in **Jabal Ansariyya** under separate administrations. Martel reacted by suspending the chamber for the next two years. In March 1936, the French high commissioner allowed a Syrian delegation, headed by **Hashim al-Atasi**, to travel to Paris to negotiate a treaty directly with the French government. The atmosphere for talks improved that June, with the election in France of the leftist Popular Front government, and the two sides reached agreement in September.

In the Franco-Syrian Treaty, Paris conceded the inclusion of Jabal Druze and the Alawi region in a unified Syrian state, but under special administrations, while the Syrians consented to clauses granting France air bases and garrisons. For the treaty to come into force, it needed ratification by Syrian and French parliaments and then Syrian admission to the League of Nations. In the end, the treaty failed. The **National Bloc**, which triumphed in Syria's November 1936 elections, formed a government to guide Syria toward treaty ratification and independence. The Syrian parliament ratified the treaty, and the French high commissioner signed it in December, but the agreement's opponents in France rallied conservative sentiment to prevent its ratification by the French parliament. The French government then sought modifications to the treaty to mollify conservative critics, but when Syrian prime minister **Jamil Mardam** showed flexibility, he was undercut by his own nationalist hard-liners. By the end of 1938, it was clear that the 1936 treaty would never be implemented, and Syria would face eight more years of French rule.

FRANKLIN-BOUILLON AGREEMENT. By this October 1921 accord between **France** and **Turkey**, France relinquished its claims to a sphere of influence in southeastern Anatolia and disputed lands on the northern Turkey-Syria frontier. The agreement stipulated a special regime for the Sanjak of **Alexandretta** by which it would be kept separate from the rest of Syria under French control and Turkish would be recognized as an official **language**. In return, the Turkish government agreed to stop supporting the rebel movements of **Ibrahim Hananu** and **Shaykh Salih al-Ali**.

FRENCH MANDATE. Between July 1920 and April 1946, **France** ruled Syria under the terms of the mandate system, which was created after **World War I** by the League of Nations to provide a legal basis and mechanisms for European rule over areas of the Middle East occupied during the war. In theory, certain countries were not prepared to rule themselves; therefore, European countries assumed the duty to guide and prepare such countries for independence. France received a provisional mandate over Syria and **Lebanon** in April 1920, under the **San Remo Agreement**. According to the League of Nations terms for the mandate, France was supposed to draft a **constitution** and guide the development of governing institutions. The mandate also made France responsible for Syria's defense, internal security, and **foreign policy**. Three months after San Remo, a French expeditionary force put teeth into the mandate by invading Syria, and, at the Battle of **Maysalun** defeating **Arab nationalist** fighters defending **Amir Faysal's** fragile state. France then detached several regions from Syria and attached them to Lebanon in August 1920, thereby creating the modern boundaries of an enlarged Lebanon. The mandatory power divided Syria into four separate districts: **Aleppo**, **Damascus**, **Jabal Druze**, and **Latakia** (for the **Alawis**). In 1925, France created a Syrian state by combining Damascus and Aleppo, but it left the Druze and Alawi regions under separate administrations, and **Alexandretta** became a special district as a concession to **Turkey's** concerns regarding the future of Turks living there. .

During the mandate's first five years, Syrian resistance took various forms, including revolts in the north led by **Ibrahim Hananu** and **Shaykh Salih al-Ali** and such organized political movements as **Abd al-Rahman Shahbandar's People's Party**. The first serious threat to French authority came from a 1925 uprising that spread from Jabal Druze to the rest of the country in the **Great Revolt**, which lasted for two years before French reinforcements suppressed it. To meet Syrian demands for political evolution and satisfy European pressures for a policy other than repression, France organized elections for a Constituent Assembly in April 1928. The leading nationalist organization, the **National Bloc**, was able to dominate the assembly's proceedings, even though its members were a **minority**, and by the end of July, the assembly issued a draft constitution. But because the constitution contained articles that effectively eliminated France's legal authority in Syria, the high commissioner rejected the draft and adjourned the assembly. There followed two years of political stalemate that ended in May 1930, when France promulgated a modified version of the 1928 draft as the basis for national elections to parliament. When these were held in December 1931–January 1932, the National Bloc won just 17 of 69 seats.

The next major political matter was negotiating a **Franco-Syrian Treaty** to govern relations between the two countries in the event of Syria gaining its independence. Because the National Bloc's parliamentary members prevent-

ed the passage of formulations preferred by France, the high commissioner suspended parliament in November 1933. Stalemate on the treaty continued until the **General Strike** of January–March 1936 induced the French to invite Bloc leaders to Paris to negotiate the terms of a treaty. This time, efforts to reach agreement bore fruit, and the draft treaty provided mechanisms for Syria's eventual independence and admittance to the League of Nations. Fresh from this diplomatic triumph, the National Bloc swept national elections to parliament, and before the end of the year, Syria had its first elected nationalist government. At the same time, Jabal Druze and the Territory of the Alawis, previously under separate administrations, were incorporated into Syria. Against these achievements, however, Syrians had to reckon with France's bowing to Turkey's ambitions to annex Alexandretta to gain Turkish neutrality in the event of a war with Italy. This debacle and the failure to secure French ratification of the 1936 treaty led the government to resign in February 1939. On the eve of **World War II**, the high commissioner suspended the constitution, dissolved parliament, and resumed separate administrations for Jabal Druze and Latakia.

When France fell to Axis forces in 1940, a pro-Vichy regime was established in Syria, but a combined British–Free French force invaded Syria and Lebanon in 1941 to remove Vichy officials. The preponderance of British troops in the invasion force made **Great Britain** the dominant military power and drastically diminished France's ability to determine its own policy toward Syria. Meanwhile, the Free French authorities had declared Syria's independence on the eve of the invasion and after consolidating their authority, but they moved slowly in actually transferring power to the Syrians. The French ended separate administrations for Jabal Druze and Latakia and then, in 1943, allowed national elections, which were swept by **Shukri al-Quwatli's National Party**, the successor to the National Bloc. In early 1945, the French sought to prolong their rule. That triggered a new round of nationalist demonstrations in May. The French suppressed the protests with a bombardment of Damascus that killed 400 Syrians, whereupon British forces seized control from the French. The last French troops withdrew on 17 April 1946.

G

GENERAL STRIKE OF 1936. This protest gave fresh momentum to the nationalist movement, which had been stalled since the 1933 suspension of parliament. When **French Mandate** authorities arrested prominent members of the **National Bloc** and closed its offices in **Damascus**, demonstrations in that city, **Aleppo**, **Hama**, and **Homs** shattered a lull in anti-**French** activities on 20 January. Merchants then went on a strike that spread to all major towns, and demonstrations spread throughout the country. Confrontations between protesters and troops resulted in dozens of deaths. The **League of National Action**, a radical Pan-Arab movement, organized protest marches in Damascus, while the National Bloc demanded the restoration of the 1930 **constitution** before the strike would be called off. For five weeks, commercial activity was frozen and students boycotted schools. Finally, on 2 March, the French agreed to the formation of a Syrian delegation to travel to Paris to negotiate a **Franco-Syrian Treaty**. When French authorities released the nationalist leaders they had arrested, the Bloc ended the strike.

GHAB. A low-lying rift northwest of **Hama** between the eastern edge of the **Jabal Ansariyya** and the Zawiya Mountains. It measures 80 kilometers from north to south and about 15 kilometers from east to west. The **Orontes River** passes through it from south to north. Until the 20th century, the Ghab was a vast swamp, but two barrages on the Orontes and drainage of the marshes have reclaimed the land for **agriculture**. Work on reclamation began in 1954, with the deepening of the riverbed, diversion of the river, and construction of a dam to channel water to irrigation canals. When the project was completed in 1968, the new irrigation system made possible the cultivation of wheat and barley in the winter, and cotton, rice, and sugar beets in the summer.

GHANIM, WAHIB AL- (1919–2003). Early member of the **Ba`th Party** and an associate of **Zaki al-Arsuzi** when they both lived in **Alexandretta** and then **Damascus**. Ghanim got his training in medicine and then opened a practice in **Latakia**, where he recruited educated youths, including future

president **Hafiz al-Asad**, into the party. In 1947, party cofounders **Michel Aflaq** and **Salah al-Din al-Bitar** met with Ghanim and persuaded him to bring some of Arsuzi's followers into their movement. Consequently, he attended the Ba'th's founding congress in April 1947, and was elected to its four-man Executive Committee. In 1954, Ghanim was one of 22 party members to win a seat in parliament, and he became minister of health in **Sabri al-Asali's** February to September 1955 government. The party's Syrian branch dissolved itself on the eve of the **United Arab Republic's (UAR)** formation, causing deep disarray and internal strife. When the Ba'th re-emerged after Syria's secession from the UAR, Ghanim was no longer a member, but he ran for parliament and won in the December 1961 election, this time as an independent from Latakia. Following the **March 8, 1963 Coup**, however, he dropped out of politics.

GHAZZI, SA'ID AL- (1897–1967). Nonpartisan prime minister from 19 June to 14 October 1954, and again from 13 September 1955 to 2 June 1956. Ghazzi, a lawyer from an old **Damascus family**, belonged to the **National Bloc** from 1928 to 1936, and he served in cabinets during the early independence period. The first time he served as prime minister, his task was to form a nonpartisan government that would preside over parliamentary elections in September 1954, Syria's first free elections after four years of military dictatorship under **Adib al-Shishakli**. Ghazzi pledged to keep the government from interfering in the election. The result was a large gain for leftist parties, particularly the **Ba'th Party**, which won 22 seats. The **Syrian Communist Party's** **Khalid Bakdash** and the neutralist **Khalid al-Azm** were also elected. After the elections, a new cabinet formed, and Ghazzi stepped down.

In September 1955, President **Shukri al-Quwwatli** invited Ghazzi to head another government that pursued a neutralist foreign policy, meaning that Syria would not join the **Baghdad Pact**. To stiffen Syria's resistance to Western pressures for adherence to the pact, Ghazzi's government negotiated the Egyptian–Syrian Defense Pact in October and developed closer ties to the Soviet Union, concluding military and commercial agreements with the Soviet Bloc. In June 1956, the shaky conservative coalition that kept his cabinet together came unraveled, and Ghazzi resigned.

GHUTA. A general term for a cultivated area in the midst of arid land that is dependent on springwater diverted to irrigation channels. More specifically, the Ghuta is the broad cultivated area of 10 by 12 miles surrounding **Damascus** watered by the **Barada River** and its six man-made branches. There are several large villages and many smaller ones in this densely populated oasis.

A variety of crops are cultivated here, including cucumbers, grapes, onions, melons, and eggplants; the orchards include apricot, almond, cherry, fig, walnut, peach, pear, and plum trees.

GOLAN HEIGHTS. The high plateau in southwestern Syria occupied by **Israel** in the **June 1967 War**. The Heights average 1,000 meters in altitude and comprise an area of approximately 1,750 square kilometers. From north to south, the Heights run for 65 kilometers and have a width of 12 to 25 kilometers. The region is of key strategic significance because it dominates the topography where the borders of Israel, **Lebanon**, and Syria converge. Moreover, the sources of the Jordan River and **Yarmuk River** spring from the Golan Heights.

During the 1967 war, about 35,000 Syrians fled their homes, and, by early 1968, the Israeli occupation had displaced another 100,000 Syrians; the Israelis allowed only approximately 10,000 Syrians, mostly **Druzes**, to remain. In 1968, Israel established its first settlement on the Golan Heights. During the next four years, Israel introduced only about 600 settlers, but after the **October 1973 War**, that number grew to 1,800 in one year and 7,000 by 1980. By 1990, Israel had constructed 35 more settlements, with a total Jewish population of 13,000; the Syrian population in the six remaining Arab villages numbered 16,000. Moreover, in December 1981, Israel declared the extension of its law to the Heights, effectively annexing them.

Israel's 1967 occupation of the Golan Heights changed the nature of its conflict with Syria. It was no longer a matter of Arab solidarity; now the confrontation involved the recovery of occupied territory. Syrian determination to recover the Heights lay behind President **Hafiz al-Asad's** collaboration with Egyptian president Anwar Sadat to launch the October 1973 War. After the war, Syria recovered a small portion of the Heights, including the district center, **Qunaytra**, which had been demolished by the Israelis. Syria's primary goal in the **Syrian-Israeli peace talks** since 1991 has been the recovery of the entire region, whereas Israel has declared its willingness to undertake a partial withdrawal in exchange for normal relations.

There were a few attempts to revive peace talks during President **Bashar al-Asad's** tenure. While he rejected the U.S.-backed **Palestinian-Israeli** peace plan in 2003, there were reports of secret meetings between Syrian and Israeli officials. The meetings ceased when their existence became public, but that did not stop the Asad regime from pressing the **United States** to lean on Israel to restart negotiations. While Syria claimed that it was not attaching any conditions to the talks, it did request that the talks begin where they left off in 2000. A year later, Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon claimed that he was ready to meet with President Asad, provided certain conditions were met. While Syria initially objected to Prime Minister Sharon's conditions, the

Syrian ambassador to London indicated that Syria would come to the table without preconditions and even began to back off the stance that talks should begin where they ended in 2000.

In 2008, **Turkey's** prime minister, Recep Erdoğan, attempted to mediate a peace deal between Syria and Israel regarding the Golan Heights. For a time, many observers were hopeful that a peace deal could be reached. Turkey's good relations with both countries made it an excellent choice of mediator, and Israeli prime minister Ehud Olmert did not deny claims that his government had indicated a willingness to completely withdraw from the Golan Heights. The talks abruptly ended when Prime Minister Olmert was forced to resign during a **corruption** inquiry. Benjamin Netanyahu came to power in February 2009, and he vowed a much tougher line on the Golan Heights. This intransigence on the part of the new Israeli government led President Asad to declare that a deal could not be reached, and the Turkish initiative ended.

The **Syrian Uprising** has destabilized the peacekeeping regime in the Golan Heights. In May 2013, rebels abducted and held for several days members of the **United Nations Disengagement Observer Force**, which has patrolled the buffer strip between Syria and Israeli-occupied territory since 1974. In addition, Israeli and Syrian forces exchanged fire across the border in May and June, raising the prospect of regional spillover resulting from Syria's turmoil.

GREAT BRITAIN. During **Bashar al-Asad's** rule, Syria and Great Britain made a number of attempts to improve relations that never took hold due to incompatible strategic interests. In November 2001, Prime Minister Tony Blair became the first British head of state to visit Syria. The trip took place in the wake of al-Qa'ida's 11 September 2001 attacks on the **United States** and was intended to shore up support for a broad antiterrorist coalition; however, the two leaders failed to agree on a definition of **terrorism**. In a joint press conference, President Asad criticized allied efforts in Afghanistan and described such militant groups as **Hizballah** and **Hamas** as freedom fighters. Blair defended the Afghan war as a strategy aimed at minimizing casualties in the future, as opposed to terrorist attacks that seek to maximize the number dead. After the heated exchanging of opinions, the two leaders held private talks to discuss developments in peace negotiations between **Israel** and Syria.

Bilateral relations worsened in the aftermath of the 2005 assassination of former Lebanese prime minister **Rafiq al-Hariri** and did not begin to improve until 2008, when Foreign Minister David Miliband visited **Damascus** in an effort to reengage the Asad regime after a period of diplomatic isolation. The trip signaled a change in Britain's strategic outlook on the Middle East, particularly in regard to Syrian leadership. British officials believed that

Asad was adopting policies toward **Lebanon** and **Iraq** that were in accord with Western interests. Miliband and Asad again discussed Syria's sponsorship of Hizballah and Hamas, but once again the Syrian president defended them as legitimate forms of resistance to Israeli occupation. While no compromise was reached, the visit shored up renewed commitment for strong diplomatic, political, and economic ties. Like other Western powers, Great Britain responded to the **Syrian Uprising** by imposing sanctions on high-ranking officials in the government and giving diplomatic support to opposition forces seeking to overthrow the Asad regime. *See also* FOREIGN POLICY.

GREAT REVOLT. This Syrian revolt of 1925–1927 against the **French Mandate** began in **Jabal Druze** and spread to the rest of the country. In the first few years of the mandate, **Druze** notables objected to the erosion of their traditional authority. When **French** officials arrested a number of Druze chiefs in **Damascus**, **Sultan al-Atrash** launched a revolt to drive the French out of their region beginning on 18 July 1925. A month later, nationalist leaders of the first **People's Party** met in Damascus with representatives of Atrash to agree on a plan to widen the uprising. In October and November, Damascus, **Hama**, and other towns also rose in revolt, but, for the most part, rebel activities were confined to the Syrian countryside south of Damascus and between Damascus and **Homs**. On 18 October, several hundred armed nationalists entered the old city of Damascus and took it over. The French responded with artillery and air attacks on the old city for the next two days, killing several hundred civilians.

In March 1926, the French initiated a major campaign to regain control over rebel-held territory in central and southern Syria. The next month, French forces seized **Suwayda**, the main city in Jabal Druze. Then, on 7 May, French warplanes bombarded the Maydan quarter of Damascus to destroy rebel strongholds there and expel the rebels from the city. As the French poured in thousands of troops in 1926, they made headway in suppressing the revolt and, by the end of the year, had regained control of most of the country. In July 1927, the Great Revolt came to an end as the French pacified the last pockets of resistance around Hama and in Jabal Druze. Syrians consider the Great Revolt to be the first nationalist uprising in their history.

GREATER ARAB FREE TRADE AGREEMENT. Fourteen members of the Arab League signed the Greater Arab Free Trade Agreement in 1997, as a Pan-Arab initiative aimed at removing tariff and nontariff barriers to regional trade. The agreement went into effect in January 2005, and contributed to increased trade within the Arab world. On 24 November 2008, Syrian prime

minister Muhammad Naji al-Otari announced the establishment of a validation committee that would authenticate the certificates of origin from member states exporting products to Syria. The move was intended to eliminate certificates forged by Syrian traders.

GREATER SYRIA. A term that refers to the territory of historical Syria, indicated by the Arabic *bilad al-sham* (the land of Syria), and includes the contemporary nations of **Israel**, **Jordan**, **Lebanon**, Syria, and the **Turkish** province of Hatay (**Alexandretta**). Since **France** and **Great Britain** partitioned historical Syria into four separate territories after **World War I**, there have been various political movements and forces seeking to establish a unified Greater Syrian state. Amir Abdallah, the **Hashemite** ruler of **Transjordan**, hoped to annex Syria, Lebanon, and **Palestine** to his domain. During **World War II**, when it was apparent that the **French Mandate** would soon expire, Abdallah campaigned for the unification of Syria and Transjordan under his throne. The first elected president of Syria, **Shukri al-Quwwatli**, a longtime supporter of **Saudi Arabia's** interests, made it clear that Syria would not join on Abdallah's terms, but that Transjordan could become part of the Syrian Republic. The Hashemite ruler's attention was also drawn to Palestine, and his forces occupied portions of that land in the **Palestine War of 1948**. After Abdallah's death in 1951, leadership in the Hashemite family passed to his nephew, Abdul-Ilah, the regent of **Iraq** and advocate of the rival **Fertile Crescent Plan** for Iraqi hegemony. The **Syrian Social National Party**, founded by **Antun al-Sa'ada**, also sought to restore what Sa'ada considered to be Syria's natural unity.

GREEK CATHOLIC. Former **Greek Orthodox Christians** who, since 1724, have converted to the **Catholic** rite. They are also known as Roman Catholics and as Melkites. During the 18th century, Greek Catholics tended to come from the wealthier and better-educated ranks of urban Christians, particularly in **Aleppo** and **Damascus**. In the second half of that century, a number of Greek Catholics, under pressure from the Orthodox, immigrated to coastal towns of **Lebanon** and **Palestine**, as well as to **Egypt**, where they became crucial players in that country's growing **trade** with Europe. Their patriarch of Antioch is currently resident in Damascus. Today, Greek Catholics live mostly in Damascus and Aleppo, and they number about 190,000. Because Christians have fared well in the secular political climate fostered by the **Ba'th Party** regimes that ruled the country since 1963, Greek Catholics have tended to support the government against rebels during the **Syrian Uprising**.

GREEK ORTHODOX. The largest **Christian** community in Syria and, until 1453, also known as Melkites. The Greek Orthodox Church consists of four patriarchates: Constantinople, Alexandria, Jerusalem, and Antioch. Syrian followers are under the See of Antioch, which is mostly Arab. These Christians adhered to the official imperial dogma of the **Byzantine Empire**, and because of their affiliation with the Byzantine church, for centuries a formidable military foe of Muslim dynasties, the Greek Orthodox suffered greater intolerance and suspicion than did other eastern Christians. They did not get along well with the **Crusaders**, who represented Latin Christianity, yet Muslims suspected the Melkites of sympathy with the Frankish invaders.

During the **Ottoman** era, the patriarch of Constantinople reasserted his authority over his Syrian flock, but by the 17th century, the Greek Orthodox of Syria had abandoned the Greek liturgy and adopted Arabic in its stead, setting the stage for friction with the patriarchate between speakers of Greek and Arabic. In the 19th century, they sought the support and protection of the **Russian Empire**. During the 20th century, Orthodox Arabs showed a strong propensity for **Arab nationalism**. Antioch was the seat of the patriarch, but in modern Syria, his residence is in **Damascus**, and the patriarch has been an Arab since 1899. Greek Orthodox Christians presently number around 800,000, and they are concentrated in Damascus, **Latakia**, **Homs**, **Hama**, as well as villages along the Homs Gap in a region called the Valley of the Christians (*Wadi al-Nasara*). Apart from a handful of **human rights** and democracy activists, most Greek Orthodox Christians have supported the government during the **Syrian Uprising**.

GYPSIES. In Syria, the most common term for this numerically small, widely dispersed group of people is “*nawar*.” They seem to have migrated to Syria from the east in **Byzantine** times. As in other lands, they keep apart from the rest of the population, which regards them as dishonorable, yet clever, folk. The gypsies have traditionally provided **musical** entertainment at weddings and celebrations. The participation of gypsy **women** in such activities is lucrative, yet at the same time it reinforces the group’s low status. Gypsies also appear at festivals to ply their **trade** as fortune-tellers, sorcerers, and animal trainers. In contemporary Syria, one may still encounter gypsy encampments in rural areas.

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HAFFAR, LUTFI AL- (1885–1968). A wealthy merchant and prominent nationalist politician who served as minister in several cabinets during the **French Mandate** and early independence periods. Haffar's first political association was with **Abd al-Rahman Shahbandar** and the **People's Party**, established in 1925. After the suppression of this party, Haffar became a founding member of the **National Bloc** and acquired a reputation for advocating economic nationalism. He was the guiding force behind the construction of the first public **water** system for **Damascus**, completed in 1932, under the auspices of one of Syria's first publicly held companies, the Ayn al-Fija Company. During the brief period of National Bloc rule, from 1936 to 1939, Haffar became prime minister in February 1939. His cabinet was buffeted by criticism from radical nationalists for its willingness to compromise with France and by the incipient revolt of **Sulayman al-Murshid** in the northwest. Haffar stepped down after a month in office. During the independence era, he was elected to parliament and served as minister of the interior from 1943 to 1946. He also participated in founding the **National Party** and briefly served as its chief.

HAFIZ, AMIN AL- (1920–2009). Strongman of the first Ba`thist regime from 1963 to 1966. Hafiz was a **Sunni** officer from **Aleppo** who had participated in the February 1954 coup against **Adib al-Shishakli**. During the **United Arab Republic** era, he was posted to Cairo, where members of the **Military Committee** met him and grew to trust him, even though he was not a member of the **Ba`th Party**. In December 1961, he was sent to **Argentina** as military attaché, but following the **March 8, 1963 Coup**, he was invited to return to Syria and become minister of the interior, essentially to serve as the front man for the Military Committee. In June, Hafiz added the Ministry of Defense to his portfolio, and the following month, he became chief of staff and chairman of the **National Revolutionary Command Council**. In November, he replaced **Salah al-Din al-Bitar** as prime minister. Following the April 1964 riots in **Hama**, he stepped down as prime minister but returned to office again in September.

In terms of the Ba`th Party's internal power struggles, Hafiz at first leaned toward neither the original leadership nor the Military Committee, the two main factions that struggled for control, but as power within the party shifted from the old guard to younger, more radical officers, he sided with the former group. When the Military Committee launched its **February 23, 1966 Coup**, it sent a large and well-armed force to his villa in **Damascus**, and a pitched battle ensued that ended in 50 deaths and Hafiz's surrender. At first, the **Neo-Ba`th** regime imprisoned him, but it later allowed him to leave the country. He initially went to Beirut and then to Baghdad when **Iraqi Ba`thists** seized power in July 1968. He supported Saddam Husayn and was active in various groups seeking to overthrow the regime in Syria. When U.S. forces invaded Iraq in 2003, Hafiz returned to Syria, with the permission of **Bashar al-Asad**, the son of his former comrade and adversary in the Ba`th Party struggles of the 1960s.

HAKIM, HASAN AL- (1886–1988). Nationalist politician during the **French Mandate**, member of the **Iron Hand Society** and the first **People's Party**, and a close associate of **Abd al-Rahman Shahbandar**. The **French** chose Hakim to be prime minister from September 1941 until April 1942. He was a leading independent pro-**Hashemite** politician in the early years of independence and favored unity with **Iraq**, **Jordan**, and **Lebanon**. He also called for Syria to align itself with the West in the context of the Cold War. In the unstable political climate of **Adib al-Shishakli's** first two years, governments rose and fell rapidly. With relations between the Syrian Army and the People's Party deteriorating, Hakim was called upon in August 1951 to form the fifth government in less than two years. The major issue during his brief tenure was whether Syria should participate in a pro-Western Middle Eastern defense organization put forth by **Great Britain**, France, and the **United States** in October. When his foreign minister bluntly attacked the proposal, the pro-Western Hakim could not hold his cabinet together, and he resigned in November.

HALQI, WA'IL NADIR AL- (1964–). Appointed prime minister during the **Syrian Uprising** in August 2012. A native of Jasim, a town near **Dar'a**, Halqi obtained a degree in medicine from the University of **Damascus** before pursuing his master's degree in gynecology and obstetrics. He served as director of health care in his hometown before being named secretary of the **Ba`th Party's** Dar'a branch. In 2010, he became chief of Syrian doctors, and the next year he was appointed to the cabinet as minister of health. When then-prime minister **Riyad Hijab** defected to **Jordan** in August 2012, President **Bashar al-Asad** appointed Halqi to replace him. In April 2013, he was the ostensible target of a bomb attack that he survived.

HAMA. Biblical name Hamath. This city straddles the banks of the **Orontes River** 54 kilometers north of **Homs** and 150 kilometers south of **Aleppo**. It is in a region of orchards and cereal cultivation, and its proximity to the Syrian Desert has made it a market town for the **Bedouin** throughout history. In medieval times, Arab rulers of various dynasties struggled to control the town. It is widely known for its many **norias**, or waterwheels, the greatest of which rises 22 meters above the Orontes to lift water to the city's aqueducts, which conduct the **water** to city homes and outlying fields. Hama's population greatly increased during the 20th century and continues to do so, rising from 60,000 in 1930 to about 1.4 million today.

Since the **Ba`th Party** came to power in 1963, Hama has been the center of strong religious opposition because of its special historical relationship with the **Alawi** countryside to its west. A handful of **Sunni families** owned most of the lands of nearby villages and wielded complete economic and political domination over their Alawi inhabitants. The Ba`thist regime promoted secularism and implemented **land reform** that undermined the basis of landlord domination over the countryside, policies that the city's Sunnis perceived as purposefully inflicting sectarian-class vengeance and attacking **Islam's** preeminence in Syria. There were demonstrations and violent attacks on the regime in April 1964, and, in February 1982, the **Muslim Brotherhood** launched a full-scale revolt against the government of **Hafiz al-Asad**. Government forces killed between 5,000 and 20,000 people and leveled much of the city in two weeks of bitter fighting. The government then rapidly reconstructed the city's devastated portions, but memories of the episode never faded and form part of recent historical events that motivate Islamist factions in the **Syrian Uprising**.

HAMAS. An **Islamist Palestinian** political organization founded in 1988, during the first Palestinian Uprising (*Intifada*). In Arabic, *hamas* means zeal, and the word is also a reverse acronym for Islamic Resistance Movement. The leadership and ideology of Hamas came from the Palestinian branch of the **Muslim Brotherhood**. Its purpose is to liberate **Palestine** from **Israeli** occupation and establish an Islamic state in what are now Israel, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip. The group gained popularity by providing extensive social services and carrying out what many Arabs regard as brave acts of resistance against the Israeli Defense Forces. Their militant tactics include suicide bombings, short-range rocket launches, and border raids. The **European Union**, the **United States**, Canada, Israel, and Japan classify it as a **terrorist** organization for deliberately targeting civilians. Hamas strengthened its political standing when it won the January 2006 general election in the Palestinian Authority. A year later, it took control of the Gaza Strip in a bloody revolt against Palestinian Authority leader Mahmud Abbas. While

leaders have embarked on diplomatic visits to several countries, the movement remains committed to armed struggle against Israel, and their legitimacy continues to be questioned outside the Muslim world.

The Syrian government supported Hamas as part of the “axis of resistance” (along with **Iran** and **Hizballah**), so named for their opposition to U.S. president George W. Bush’s term “axis of evil,” which included **Iran**, **Iraq**, and North Korea. Backing Hamas was part of **Bashar al-Asad’s** foreign policy strategy to pose as a leader defying the United States and Israel. His regime allowed Hamas to maintain political headquarters in **Damascus** from 2001 until 2012. In the early stages of the **Syrian Uprising**, Hamas’s leadership staged rallies in Gaza to show its support for Asad, but most ordinary Palestinians sympathized with Syria’s largely **Sunni** opposition, forcing the organization to change its position. In early 2012, Hamas prime minister (of Gaza) Isma’il Haniya expressed support for the Syrian opposition. Hamas closed its offices in Damascus and transferred headquarters to Cairo, where the Muslim Brotherhood had gained a powerful hold on elected offices in the wake of **Egypt’s Arab Spring** overthrow of President Husni Mubarak.

HAMDANID DYNASTY. From its capital in **Aleppo**, this dynasty ruled northern and parts of central Syria between 944 and 1016. The Hamdanids came from **Jazira**, where their ancestral tribe had dwelled since pre-**Islamic** times. During the early 10th century, the weakness of the **Abbasid caliphate** in Baghdad facilitated the emergence of several regional dynasties, including the Hamdanids in the northern **Iraqi** city of Mosul. Like other such powers, the Hamdanids began their rise by keeping order on behalf of the Abbasids, fighting **Kharijis**, defending against **Qarmati** raids, and participating in the restoration of Abbasid authority in southern Syria by helping to oust the Tulunids.

The founder of Hamdanid power in northern Syria was Sayf al-Dawla (r. 944–967), younger brother of the Hamdanid ruler in Mosul. In 944, he seized Aleppo and **Homs** from the Ikhshidids. From Aleppo he led Muslim forces against **Byzantine** armies encroaching on northern Syria after a hiatus in conflict on that frontier since early Abbasid times more than a century before. During the course of these campaigns, the Byzantines took the offensive a number of times and occupied portions of northern Syria, including Aleppo in 962 and 969. The **Christian** power raided as far south as Homs and along much of the Syrian littoral (Antioch fell in 969) as far as Tripoli. The Hamdanids thus became de facto tributaries to the Byzantine Empire. In 1016, the last Hamdanid ruler of Aleppo, little more than a dependent of the Byzantines, fled from **Mirdasid** forces seeking to avenge the murder of their clans-

men. In Islamic history, this short-lived dynasty is famed for its rulers' generous patronage, which attracted a brilliant circle of poets, including **Abu al-Tayyib al-Mutanabbi**, such philosophers as al-Farabi, and scientists.

HANANU, IBRAHIM (1869–1935). Leader of resistance to the establishment of the **French Mandate** in northern Syria. Hananu came from a **Kurdish** landowning family in a rural area near **Aleppo**. During the **Ottoman** era, he worked in the provincial administration, yet he participated in the **Arab Revolt** against the Ottomans. When the threat of a **French** invasion loomed, he organized a militia called the League of National Defense, and, in the fall of 1919, he launched a revolt in nearby rural districts. His movement depended on support from **Turkish** nationalist forces fighting the French for control over southeastern Turkey. The revolt crested in late 1920, when large portions of northwest Syria were controlled by Hananu's forces. The tide turned against him, however, in 1921, with the arrival of French reinforcements and the conclusion of the **Franklin–Bouillon Agreement** between Turkey and France. Turkish support then vanished, French forces went on the offensive, Hananu fled to **Transjordan**, and the revolt was suppressed.

When Hananu returned to Syria, he became a leader of the **National Bloc's** radical Aleppan faction. In 1928, Hananu was elected to the Constituent Assembly and named chairman of the committee to draft the **constitution**. When France promulgated a constitution that excluded articles strengthening Syrian self-rule, he strenuously opposed all moves to cooperate on the basis of what he considered an illegal document. In particular, he rejected Bloc chief **Jamil Mardam's** tactic of "honorable cooperation" and engineered Mardam's resignation as prime minister rather than sign a treaty that compromised Syrian unity. Hananu directed the Bloc's Aleppan faction until his death in 1935.

HARIRI, RAFIQ AL-, ASSASSINATION. On 14 February 2005, former **Lebanese** prime minister Rafiq al-Hariri was killed in a massive car bombing in Beirut. Hariri had served as prime minister from 1992 until 1998, and again from 2000 to 2004. He was widely regarded as the leader of Lebanese reconstruction efforts during the post–Civil War era. His 2004 resignation signaled his opposition to the extension of President Émile Lahoud's term because it violated the Lebanese constitution and marked the ongoing political domination by Syria. Suspicion of Syrian involvement in Hariri's assassination triggered massive demonstrations throughout Lebanon that became known as the **Cedar Revolution**. Squeezed by the surge in anti-Syrian sentiment in Lebanon and international pressure, President **Bashar al-Asad** withdrew Syrian troops by the end of April 2005.

The **United Nations (UN)** responded to Hariri's assassination by creating an investigative commission and increasing pressure on President Asad to completely withdraw Syrian troops from Lebanon in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 1559. The first UN investigation resulted in the FitzGerald Report, published in March 2005, which blamed Syria for stoking the political tensions that surrounded Hariri's assassination. UN Security Council Resolution 1595 then authorized the formation of an International Independent Investigation Committee to assist Lebanese authorities in their investigation of the crime. Under its first commissioner, Detlev Mehlis, the committee interviewed Syrian and Lebanese officials and indicated in an interim report that Syrian and Lebanese intelligence officers were responsible for the bombing. UN investigators accused Syrian officials of tampering with evidence, intimidating witnesses, and perjury. In November 2005, the UN adopted Resolution 1636 to prevent **Damascus** from further obstructing the investigation. Member states threatened the Syrian regime with economic sanctions, asset freezes, and travel embargos if officials continued to thwart the commission's efforts. Syria was ordered to cooperate with investigators and provide access to documents, suspects, and places. On 28 November 2005, a former witness in the Mehlis investigation announced on Syrian television that he had given false testimony after being kidnapped, tortured, drugged, and offered a \$1.3 billion bribe by Lebanese officials to implicate Syria in the assassination. UN leaders expressed doubt about the witness's statements, and Mehlis argued that the television appearance was part of a Syrian strategy to undercut the credibility of the investigation. The Mehlis Commission's final report in December 2005 identified 19 suspects and denounced Syrian officials for their lack of cooperation. Syria and **Hizballah** claimed that the Mehlis Commission was under pressure from the **United States** and **France** to point the finger at Damascus.

In January 2006, Commissioner Mehlis was replaced by Serge Brammertz. The new commissioner's casual and glacial pace appealed to Syrian officials but drew substantial criticism from representatives eager to complete the UN investigation and begin prosecuting suspects. In March 2006, Brammertz submitted a progress report that was much more cautious and circumspect than the Mehlis Report, remarking on the professional execution of the operation rather than naming particular individuals. At the behest of the Lebanese government, the UN created a Special Tribunal for Lebanon in 2009 to try defendants accused of carrying out the Hariri assassination. In 2011, a sealed indictment was delivered to the pretrial judge, naming four members of Hizballah.

HARIRI, ZIYAD AL- (1930–). A key figure in the **March 8, 1963 Coup** that toppled the 18-month **secessionist regime** that followed the **United Arab Republic (UAR)**. A brother-in-law of **Akram al-Hawrani**, General

Hariri did not belong to any political party, but he cooperated with Ba`thist and Nasserist officers in the coup. His purpose in seizing power was to reestablish the UAR, but the Ba`thist officers were completely against such a move. The Ba`thist **Military Committee** maneuvered to consolidate its power, but the existence of units loyal to Hariri demanded caution in getting rid of the general. An opportunity arose when he traveled to Algeria in June. The Military Committee and Minister of Interior **Amin al-Hafiz** forced about 30 of Hariri's officer allies to retire, so that when he returned, the **National Revolutionary Command Council** was able to remove Hariri as chief of staff of the **armed forces**. On 8 July 1963, Hariri left Syria for exile in **France**.

HASAKA, AL- Town located 500 kilometers east of **Aleppo**, in the heart of **Jazira**. This northeastern town is the seat of the country's largest governorate (population 1 million) of the same name. Its economic importance lies in livestock, grain cultivation—watered by irrigation from the **Khabur River**—and **petroleum** production. The city's population is mostly **Kurdish** and **Christian**. The population numbered approximately 190,000 in 2012.

HASANI, TAJ AL-DIN AL- (1890–1943). A prominent politician of the **French Mandate** era who cooperated with the **French** and opposed the nationalists. The French rewarded Hasani by appointing him prime minister in 1928 in preparation for elections to a Constituent Assembly, and he lasted in office until 1932. The French again designated Hasani prime minister in 1934, following the failure of negotiations with the **National Bloc** on terms of a **Franco-Syrian Treaty**. Less than two years later, however, Hasani had to resign during the **General Strike of 1936**, which compelled the French to return nationalists to government. His last moment in the limelight came after the Free French–British invasion during **World War II**. On this occasion, the French appointed him president in October 1941, but he had so little credibility by then that it was difficult for nationalist cabinets to work with him. His fall from office in January 1943 preceded the nationalists' vindication in elections by six months.

HASHEMITES. A **family** of religious dignitaries originally from Mecca. The Hashemites rose to prominence in modern Arab history during **World War I**, when the Hashemite sharif of Mecca, **Husayn ibn Ali**, launched the **Arab Revolt** against **Ottoman** rule in 1916. His ambition was to establish Hashemite rule over Arabia, Syria, and **Iraq**. Ali's son **Faysal ibn Husayn al-Hashimi** established a short-lived kingdom in Syria between 1918 and 1920, and then set up a monarchy in Iraq that lasted from 1921 until 1958. Abdallah, another of Husayn's sons, established a second Hashemite regime

in **Transjordan** that has lasted from 1921 to the present. Abdallah aspired to add Syria to his kingdom throughout the **French Mandate** era. He supported **Sultan al-Atrash's** 1925 to 1927 revolt, during the course of which he developed strong ties with the **Druzes**, who thereafter tended to favor his ambitions. Among mandate-era **Arab nationalists**, **Abd al-Rahman Shahbandar** led pro-Hashemite forces in Syria. When Syria gained independence, the Hashemite rulers of **Jordan** and Iraq sought to establish their authority over Syria through a variety of unity schemes. **Saudi Arabia** and **Egypt** consistently and successfully opposed these plans. The fall of the Hashemite monarchy in Iraq in July 1958 sharply reduced the family's power, as it left Jordan the sole remaining possession. Even though the Hashemites rule a lesser Arab power, their historical rivals in Saudi Arabia regard them warily as possible contenders for influence in Iraq and even the Muslim holy cities of Mecca and Medina.

HAWRAN. The region in southern Syria located between **Jabal Druze** and the **Golan Heights**. Its **economy** is based on the cultivation of cereals because the area receives a fair amount of annual rainfall and cultivators can exploit abundant springs. The Hawran is a chief source of grain for **Damascus**. Its main town is **Dar'a**, with a population of about 100,000.

HAWRANI, AKRAM AL- (1914–1996). Populist politician from a prominent **Sunni family** in **Hama**. Hawrani initiated Syria's first major peasant movement and played an important role in giving the **Ba'th Party** a popular base. During the **French Mandate**, he led a local youth movement and tried to coordinate its activities with the **Syrian Social National Party (SSNP)**. In the early 1930s, he belonged to the Pan-Arab **League of National Action**. In addition to these activities, Hawrani showed a bent for dramatic action, as when he rushed to **Iraq** to back a 1941 anti-British revolt. Two years later, he was elected to the Syrian parliament, where he opposed the **National Bloc** for its indifference to social and economic issues. At the same time, he began to mobilize peasants around Hama in a movement against big landowners. Hawrani's penchant for direct action gained him further notoriety in 1945, when he and two officers, including future dictator **Adib al-Shishakli**, seized the citadel in Hama from **French** forces.

In the early independence period, Hawrani founded the **Arab Socialist Party**, drifted from the SSNP, and developed ties with young Syrian Army officers. When the **Palestine War of 1948** erupted, he enlisted with irregular forces that attacked Jewish settlements. In 1949, Hawrani initially helped establish **Husni al-Za'im's** regime but moved into opposition when the colonel designated a member of a large landowning family his prime minister. During the **Sami al-Hinnawi** regime, Hawrani served as minister of **agricul-**

ture, but he conspired with Shishakli against Hinnawi when it appeared that the elected government might vote for union with Iraq, a move he opposed because of his strong republican sentiments. After Shishakli's December 1949 coup, Hawrani became minister of defense. He and Shishakli came from Hama and had similar early political tendencies, so, for a time, Shishakli permitted Hawrani to organize attacks on landowner families in central Syria and hold an "antifeudal" rally of peasants in **Aleppo**. The two men had a falling out following the colonel's November 1951 abolition of civilian government, and Hawrani fled to **Lebanon**. He met with **Michel Aflaq** and **Salah al-Din al-Bitar** in Beirut, and they agreed to merge his party with the Ba'th Party, thereby bringing his following among army officers and peasants into the ranks of the Ba'th's supporters. It was in large measure thanks to Hawrani's popular base that the Ba'th Party won 22 seats in the 1954 elections held after Shishakli's overthrow.

As Syrian politics veered left in the next three years, Hawrani's influence increased, partly because of his informal alliance with the independent **Khalid al-Azm** and **Syrian Communist Party** leader **Khalid Bakdash**. By early 1958, Hawrani favored the establishment of the **United Arab Republic (UAR)**, and, indeed, he joined its cabinet as one of four vice presidents and, in November 1958, became minister of justice. But as **Egyptian** president Gamal Abd al-Nasser limited the scope of his and other Ba'thists' roles in government, Hawrani became disenchanted with the union experiment, resigned from the government at the end of 1959, and retired to Hama, nursing deep resentment at Egyptian domination of the UAR. He signed a public manifesto in support of the September 1961 **secessionist** coup that ended the UAR. He then successfully ran for a seat in parliament, where he defended the **land reform** legislation passed under the UAR against proposals to soften their impact on large landholders. Hawrani's bitter public criticism of Nasser and the UAR indicated his growing differences with the Ba'th's leadership, and, on 20 June 1962, he formally left the party and revived the Arab Socialist Party. He had no links with the Ba'thist regimes that have ruled Syria since 1963, spending the rest of his life outside the country. He died in **Jordan** in 1996.

HAWWA, SA'ID AL- (1935–1989). The foremost ideologue in the moderate wing of the **Muslim Brotherhood** during the 1960s and 1970s. Hawwa grew up in a petty merchant family in **Hama** in modest circumstances and inherited a disposition to political activism from his father, who had supported **Akram al-Hawrani's Arab Socialist Party** in the 1950s. At secondary school, a charismatic teacher attracted Hawwa to his religious circle at the city's primary mosque and persuaded him to join the Muslim Brothers at the age of 18. Hawwa enrolled at the Islamic Law Faculty at **Damascus University**, where he met **Muslim Brotherhood** leader **Mustafa al-Siba'i**.

During the 1964 protests in Hama, Hawwa supported the commercial strike but broke with the Muslim Brotherhood's militant wing, which was bent on a violent course of action that led to the government's crushing of the protest. In 1966, government pressure compelled him to move to **Saudi Arabia**, where he wrote the books that made him a leading **Islamist** ideologue. When he returned to Syria in 1971, his efforts to reconcile the militant and moderate factions of the Muslim Brotherhood did not bear fruit. He went to prison in 1973 for his role in organizing protests against the 1973 **constitution** because of the inclusion of an article stipulating that the head of state be Muslim. Hawwa spent his five years' incarceration writing on **Sufism** and the Qur'an. He left the country for **Jordan** shortly after his release in January 1978, and played no role in the bloody confrontation between Islamists and the regime that lasted from 1979 to 1982. From his exile, he continued to write and speak on behalf of the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood until his death.

Hawwa's writings express a strong desire to unify the diverse strands of religious sentiment that ranged from the political quiescence and piety of Sufi orders to militant Islamists espousing the radical views of the **Egyptian** ideologue Sayyid Qutb, whose views on Muslim history and society he considered wrongheaded. In the period of intense polarization between the secularizing Ba`thist regime and its religious foes, Hawwa's call for a patient, protracted campaign to construct a broad Islamic coalition had little impact.

HAYDAR HAYDAR (1936–). One of the country's leading authors of novels and short stories, from a small town near **Tartus**. Haydar spent a number of years working as a teacher in Algeria and **Lebanon** before returning to Syria in the 1980s. His prolific output addresses social and political frustrations confronting not only Syrians, but Arabs more generally. Thus, the settings in Haydar's works include Syrian villages, but also the marshes of **Iraq** and streets of Algiers. In spring 2000, one of his novels, *Banquet for Seaweed*, first published in 1983, appeared in a new edition in **Egypt**. Even though this long, complex novel's central theme is the failure of communist and nationalist movements in the Arab world, an **Islamist** pundit in Cairo created a sharp controversy by twisting the meaning of one sentence in the novel to accuse government officials of promoting blasphemy. In Egypt, the affair triggered student demonstrations and a series of legal and political confrontations, but it barely registered in Syria, where the secular regime had ruthlessly tamed Islamist activism since the early 1980s. *See also* LITERATURE.

HEALTH. The earliest public endeavors to support medical care in Syria occurred in medieval times under the **Zangid** rulers, who constructed hospitals, or **bimaristans**, in **Damascus** and **Aleppo**. Literary and **archaeological** records are insufficient for reconstructing more than a sketchy history of health care before the 20th century.

One of the measures of national economic development in modern times is the improvement of sanitary conditions, medical care, and public health. Local health departments were formed under the auspices of **French Mandate** authorities in the 1920s. Their initial efforts sought to reduce the incidence of malaria, introduce better hygiene to public eating places, and deliver safe drinking **water**. The period of **French** rule saw an increase in the number of hospitals, clinics, and medical doctors.

At independence in 1946, medical facilities were fairly limited. The country had 35 hospitals and approximately 1,700 beds for a population of 3.5 million. Residents of major towns had access to hospital care, but the north-eastern region had only two hospitals serving a vast area. Improving medical services would require construction of hospitals in underserved regions and training of physicians and nurses. Government policy supported these objectives under different regimes by devoting resources to **education** and sometimes requiring recent graduates of medical school to begin their practices in villages and small towns. With respect to general health conditions, endemic diseases included malaria and tuberculosis among the adult population and diarrhea among small children. Government programs to improve health during the early years of independence included spraying for mosquitoes, public education, and providing sanitary drinking water.

One of the hallmarks of the **Ba'th Party** regimes since the early 1960s was a concerted effort to address endemic diseases and improve public health and sanitation. The result, as measured in gross statistics, was a substantial improvement in health conditions for Syrian citizens. By the early 1970s, malaria and tuberculosis were largely contained, and nearly two-thirds of urban Syrians and half of rural Syrians had access to clean drinking water. Unlike wealthier, oil-producing Arab countries, Syria did not create a national health insurance system, but workers in the **public sector** and government offices do benefit from coverage.

Overall, health care showed marked improvement in the second half of the 20th century. The mortality rate for children fell from 201 per thousand in 1960 to 25 per thousand in 2003; the mortality rate for infants per thousand also declined, from 136 in 1960 to 27 in 1997. Average life expectancy improved as well. In 1970, it was 56 years, and, by 2001, it was 71 years: 69 for men and 73 for **women**. These improvements were related not only to government health programs, for example, an effective campaign to immunize against childhood diseases, but also to better nutrition made possible by subsidies for basic needs. In 2000, 80 percent of the population was con-

nected to treated water, but the difference between urban and rural rates was substantial: 95 percent in cities and just 65 percent in rural areas. A series of measures reduced the incidence of malaria and tuberculosis and eliminated smallpox altogether. As for HIV/AIDS, the World Health Organization reported a fairly low level of incidence and a growing program of testing for the virus.

In spite of these overall gains, access to medical care remained unevenly distributed. The national rate of 144 doctors per 100,000 around 2000 did not reflect disparities between the ready availability of general practitioners, specialists, and hospital beds in cities and their persistent scarcity in the countryside. Even though a succession of governments since 1951 discouraged newly licensed physicians from setting up practice in major cities, rural Syrians continued to have much less access to health care compared to their urban brethren.

Under President **Bashar al-Asad**, the government implemented reforms to improve the quality of services. Measures included giving hospital managers decision-making powers and requiring payment for some medical procedures that were formerly provided free of charge. Given that in 2010 almost 8 percent of the government budget was allocated to health care and that health expenditures were 4.5 percent of the gross domestic product, there was an interest in reducing health costs. Syria received 30 million euros from the European Commission to assist in modernizing the health sector. Despite these reforms, the Ministry of Health insisted that Syria would not privatize health care and would only engage in public-private partnerships.

On the eve of the **Syrian Uprising**, the number of physicians was 29,927. Dentists numbered 15,799, nurses 33,263, public hospitals 121, and private hospitals 370. Despite the larger numbers of private hospitals, there were only 8,550 private hospital beds, while there were 21,910 public hospital beds. Since the outbreak of protests in March 2011, the country's health infrastructure has suffered dreadful effects. Capacity to deliver health care as measured by the number of facilities and workers drastically shrank at the same time demand for care increased as the uprising took a violent turn. According to international observers, the deterioration in health services was partly due to attacks on hospitals and health workers carried out by government forces. By early 2013, more than half of the country's public hospitals were damaged and around one-third could not be used, many of them turned into shelters for displaced individuals. Electricity shortages impaired service in those hospitals that remained in service. The number of health workers fell as many joined the ranks of **refugees** fleeing the violence, while dangerous conditions due to the unpredictable shifts in fighting kept many health workers at home. In the Aleppo area, the number of doctors fell from 5,000 in 2010 to about 35 by 2013. Further aggravating the situation, pharmaceutical facilities were heavily damaged and their output plummeted, resulting in

shortages of such medicine and medical supplies as insulin and dialysis machines for diabetes patients. The ongoing military and political stalemate between regime and opposition forces has resulted in a continuing downward spiral in health care.

HIJAB, RIYAD FARID (1966–). A politician from **Dayr al-Zur**. Hijab was briefly prime minister during the **Syrian Uprising** from May to August 2012, when he defected to **Jordan**. He earned his doctorate in **agricultural engineering** before pursuing a political career as secretary of the **Ba`th Party's** Dayr al-Zur branch. In 2008, he was appointed governor of **Qunaytra** and, in early 2011, governor of **Latakia**. In March 2011, Hijab joined the cabinet as minister of agriculture and agrarian reform.

HINDAWI AFFAIR. Nizar Hindawi was a young **Jordanian** recruited by one of the Syrian **security forces** to plant a bomb on an **Israeli** civilian aircraft at London's Heathrow Airport on 17 April 1986. An Israeli security guard discovered the explosive in a false bottom of a piece of luggage carried by Hindawi's girlfriend (who was, by all accounts, unaware of the bag's contents). In his confession to British authorities, Hindawi directly implicated the head of Syrian Air Force Intelligence and employees of Syria's national airline. He recanted at his trial in October, but a jury found him guilty and sentenced him to a 45-year jail term. Upon the announcement of the verdict, **Great Britain** formally cut relations with Syria. The **United States** and Canada withdrew their ambassadors, while the European Community imposed political and economic sanctions. For several months, Syria endured its worst diplomatic isolation since the **Neo-Ba`th** regime of the 1960s. President **Hafiz al-Asad** managed to crack the diplomatic quarantine when he closed down the offices of the notorious Abu Nidal **terrorist** group in June 1987. The following month, the European Community withdrew its sanctions. Relations with the United States also improved, but Britain did not restore ties until November 1990, after Syria joined the anti-**Iraq** coalition in Operation Desert Shield.

HINNAWI, SAMI AL- (1898–1950). Leader of Syria's second military coup of 1949. Born in **Aleppo**, Hinnawi joined the **Troupes Spéciales du Levant** in 1927. He overthrew and executed **Husni al-Za'im** on 14 August. Unlike his predecessor, Hinnawi immediately designated a civilian government headed by **Hashim al-Atasi** and crowded with such members of the Aleppo-based, pro-Hashemite **People's Party** as **Nazim al-Qudsi**. He also appointed to the cabinet leftist politicians the likes of **Akram al-Hawrani** and **Ba`th Party** leader **Michel Aflaq**. Colonel Hinnawi handed the civilian government the task of conducting national elections to a Constituent Assem-

bly. Elections for 114 seats were held on 15 November 1949, and the People's Party won 45 seats, while 40 seats went to independents; the Ba'th Party won just one seat in **Dayr al-Zur**. Supporters of union with **Iraq**, backed by Hinnawi, hoped that the Constituent Assembly would fashion a document to facilitate such a union. Opponents of union feared just that prospect. Hinnawi was deposed on 19 December by anti-Hashemite officers led by Colonel **Adib al-Shishakli**; imprisoned until September 1950; and assassinated in Beirut on 31 October by a cousin of former prime minister Muhsin al-Barazi, who had been executed on Hinnawi's orders a year earlier.

HISN AL-AKRAD. Also known by its **French** name Crac des Chevaliers, this is the best-preserved castle from the era of the **Crusades**. It is situated at the southern end of **Jabal Ansariyya** and dominates the Homs Gap between Tripoli and **Tartus** on the Mediterranean and **Homs**. The castle covers an area of 2.5 hectares and stands 300 meters above the surrounding Buqay'a plain. It had been the site of a fortress since ancient times, and, in the 11th century, the **Mirdasid dynasty** of **Aleppo** settled **Kurdish** troops there, hence the Arabic name "Fortress of the Kurds."

In 1099, Raymond of Saint-Gilles briefly occupied Hisn al-Akrad, and it was taken over by Tancred of Antioch in 1110. The Crusaders incorporated it into a network of fortresses designed to defend against Muslim attacks that might strike at the County of Tripoli from the northeast. The knights used flares and signals to communicate with nearby castles. In 1142, the Order of the Hospitallers took control of Hisn al-Akrad. **Saladin's** attempt to seize it in 1188 was repulsed. A series of earthquakes at the turn of the 13th century damaged the castle, and the present structure dates from repairs and enlargements constructed after those tremors. The Crusader knights resisted several Muslim attempts to expel them in the early 13th century. The **Mamluk** sultan **Baybars** laid siege in late 1270 and overwhelmed defenders in April 1271.

HIZBALLAH. In the early days of the **Lebanese War of 1982**, Syria facilitated the establishment of this **Lebanese Shi'i** organization, whose name means "Party of God." Funds, arms, and ideological inspiration for Hizballah have primarily come from **Iran's** Islamic Republic, but the Syrian government has played an essential role in facilitating contacts between the group and Iran by keeping open the route from Lebanon to **Damascus**. In the 1980s, Hizballah played a central role in Syria's struggle against the efforts of **Israel** and the **United States** to create a pro-Western regime in Lebanon. The organization carried out suicide bomb attacks, guerrilla strikes against Israeli forces, and kidnappings of Westerners. While Hizballah never admitted to holding Western hostages, hostages testified upon their release that their captors were cells of the organization.

With the termination of the **Lebanese Civil War** in 1990, Hizballah entered the political scene by contesting elections to the Chamber of Deputies. In the 2003 chamber, the organization had 11 deputies (out of 128). The turn to legal political activities did not, however, spell the end of the group's militancy. It continued to spearhead armed resistance to Israeli occupation in southern Lebanon until Israel withdrew in May 2000. Many Lebanese who generally have little sympathy for Hizballah's religious zeal and populist message credited the organization with causing Israel to abandon Lebanon by steadily inflicting casualties on its troops. In addition, the organization operates extensive social network services that serve to strengthen its base of support.

Syria has benefited from Hizballah's activities even though its **Islamic fundamentalist** ideology is at odds with the **Ba'th Party** regime's secular orientation. The alliance of mutual convenience, which includes Hizballah's patron, Iran, outlasted the struggle to oust Israel from Lebanon. Both Hizballah and the Syrian government maintain that Israel continued to occupy a small slice of Lebanese territory called Shab'a Farm, and Hizballah has attacked Israeli forces there from time to time. For its part, Israel claims that this piece of land is Syrian territory it conquered in the **June 1967 War**, and the **United Nations** supported the Israeli position with old maps of the Lebanese-Syrian boundary clearly demonstrating the location of Shab'a Farm in Syria. Hizballah, however, has a stake in low-level conflict to boost its credentials as a patriotic movement against an external enemy. Moreover, leaders and members possess a zealous commitment to continuing their fight against Israel as a religious cause. Syria supports Hizballah because it wishes to make Israel uncomfortable with the status quo and exert pressure on Israel to withdraw from the **Golan Heights**. This support has, at times, prompted Israeli retaliation. One notable example occurred during the **Lebanese War of 2006**, fought between Israel and Hizballah when Israeli fighter jets buzzed President **Bashar al-Asad's** summer palace. Syrian backing for Hizballah was a chronic sore point between Syria and United States, which considers it a **terrorist** organization responsible for killing civilians in Lebanon and South America.

During the early stages of the **Syrian Uprising**, Hizballah leaders upset the Asad regime by speaking out against the violence and calling for political reform. As the uprising dragged on, however, Hizballah sided firmly with the government and, in so doing, inflamed sectarian tensions between **Sunnis** and **Shi'is** in Syria and Lebanon. Syrian opposition forces reported that Hizballah sent advisers and equipment to help the regime in its fight against rebel militias. Hizballah raised the stakes in the spring of 2013 by sending hundreds of fighters to join Syrian Army forces seeking to regain control of a town controlling a strategic crossroads between Damascus, eastern Lebanon, and the Syrian coast. Hizballah's part in the Syrian Uprising has regional

dimensions as well, since Israel and the United States worry that it might acquire chemical weapons and ballistic missiles from the Syrians; in the first half of 2013, Israel launched three air strikes on Syria intended to block a transfer of such advanced weapons.

HOLIDAYS. Syria officially observes patriotic and traditional religious—Muslim and **Christian**—holidays. The patriotic holidays include Evacuation Day on 17 April to celebrate the end of **French** rule in 1946, Revolution Day on 8 March to observe the occasion of the ruling **Ba`th Party's** rise to power, and October Liberation War Day on 6 October to observe the **October 1973 War**. There are two extended, three-day official Muslim holidays for the Ramadan Feast (*Id al-Fitr*) and the Feast of the Sacrifice (*Id al-Adha*) at the end of the Meccan pilgrimage rites. In addition, Syrians observe the Prophet's birthday (*mawlid al-nabi*) and the Muslim New Year. Christians publicly celebrate **Catholic** and Orthodox Christmas and Easter. The country also closes government offices on New Year's Day.

HOMS. *Hims* in Arabic, *Emesa* in Latin. A central Syrian city on the eastern bank of the **Orontes River**. Several factors make Homs the major city on the route between **Damascus** and **Aleppo**. It is at the eastern end of the Homs Gap, a pass between **Jabal Ansariyya** and the Lebanon Mountains that leads from Tripoli to the Syrian interior. Because of the Homs Gap, the area around Homs receives much more rainfall than interior regions to its north and south. Thus, the city lies at the center of a cultivated region (crops include wheat, barley, lentils, cotton, sugar beets, vines) and also serves as a point of exchange between the sedentary zone and the desert. Moreover, because of easy access to the Mediterranean Sea, Homs has attracted overland **trade** from the Persian Gulf, just as in recent history an oil pipeline from northern **Iraq** passed through Homs on its way to Tripoli and **Baniyas**. Syria's major oil refinery is in Homs. Furthermore, because Homs is roughly halfway between Aleppo and Damascus, it participates in trade with and between these centers.

Homs may have been founded by the Seleucids. During Roman times, the city contributed two emperors, Marcus Aurelius Antoninus and his successor, Alexander Severus. **Umayyad** rulers based in Damascus used Homs to launch military campaigns against the **Byzantines**, but with the rise of the **Abbasids** and the shift of imperial power to Baghdad, the area declined in status. The city suffered several Byzantine occupations and much destruction in the late 10th century. During the era of the **Crusades**, the **Atabegs** and **Ayyubids** turned Homs into a major staging point for campaigns against the

Franks. In modern times, the city's population has grown from 50,000 in 1912 to about 1.3 million. It is one of several important provincial centers of **industrial** production.

HOMS, BATTLE OF. In 1281, the **Mongols** launched their largest and best-planned invasion of **Mamluk**-ruled Syria. A Mongol force of 80,000 engaged a Mamluk army of unknown size just outside of **Homs**. From Muslim chronicles, it appears that the Mamluks were on the verge of defeat when their field commander cleverly devised a ruse to allow his forces to outmaneuver the Mongols and attack their main force from the rear, thereby turning the battle into a rout. While this was not the last Mongol incursion into Syria, it was, in certain respects, the most decisive one in that the Mamluks demonstrated their ability to defeat a large, well-organized Mongol offensive. Thus, the Battle of Homs contributed to the legitimacy of Mamluk rule in Syria at the beginning of its third decade.

HOMSI, MA'MUN AL- (c. 1955–). Former member of parliament and prominent Syrian opposition figure in the early years of **Bashar al-Asad's** rule. Homsy was first arrested in 2001 for petitioning to revoke the **Emergency Law**, charged with taking illegal action to revise the **constitution**, and sentenced to five years in jail. After his release in 2006, he was arbitrarily detained by **security forces** in front of his house. While his second incarceration was brief, it was enough to convince him that his life was in danger, and he moved to **Lebanon**, where he continued to criticize regime policies. Although state officials seized his assets and harassed several of his relatives, Homsy refused to conform. He signed the **Beirut–Damascus Declaration** in 2006, supported a boycott of parliamentary elections in 2007, and wrote a formal letter to U.S. congressional representative Nancy Pelosi asking her to refrain from visiting President **Bashar al-Asad**. In 2009, as relations between Syria and neighboring Lebanon improved, government officials informed Homsy that his residency would not be renewed, and he moved to Canada.

HONOR KILLINGS. Syria is among the Muslim countries where men murder female relatives for what they regard as violations of **family** honor by engaging in some kind of unapproved relationship with an unrelated male. Men who commit these crimes believe that the victim has stained the family's honor, which can only be redeemed by killing her. In the early 21st century, it was estimated that approximately three women each year were victims of honor killings. On 1 July 2009, President **Bashar al-Asad** amended Article 548 of the penal code to increase the prison sentence for men found guilty of committing an honor killing to a minimum of two years.

The original article mandated light sentences, stating that, “he who catches his wife or one of his ascendants, descendants, or sister committing adultery (*flagrante delicto*) or illegitimate sexual acts with another and he kills or injures one or both of them benefits from an exemption of penalty.” The amendment raised the prison sentence from two years to a maximum of seven years in jail, compared to the regular sentence of 15 years for nonpremeditated murder in Syria. Loopholes remain in the amendment for cases involving an adulteress or illegitimate sex acts.

HUMAN RIGHTS. Except for a few brief periods of civilian democratic rule, independent Syria has a terrible record of human rights abuses. Since 1963, **Ba`th Party** regimes have forged a formidable framework of **Emergency Law**, decrees, and regulations that deny freedoms of expression and association and citizens’ rights to fair trials and humane conditions of incarceration. The regimes have also developed an elaborate set of **security forces** to intimidate and harass citizens who dare to question their policies. Observers of Syrian politics consider the human rights nightmare a barometer of the regimes’ lack of legitimacy and fragility. Whatever the cause, the high degree of surveillance and suppression of dissent suggest a fear that without ceaseless vigilance, enemies of the government would topple it.

The human rights situation hit its nadir during the political disturbances of the late 1970s and early 1980s. The two most infamous events from that period were the June 1980 massacre of approximately 500 political prisoners at the Tadmor military prison (**Palmyra**) after an unsuccessful attempt to assassinate President **Hafiz al-Asad**, and the February 1982 killing of thousands of civilians in **Hama** when government forces recaptured the city from **Islamic fundamentalist** insurgents. The early 1980s probably represented the high point in sweeping arbitrary arrests, detention without trial, and summary proceedings against suspected political activists. Documented accounts of torture of political prisoners are numerous and include many instances of permanent disability and death from torture. Members of different Islamist groups and communist parties comprise the majority of such prisoners.

During the 1990s, the government declared amnesties for hundreds of political prisoners. For example, in March 1995, between 500 and 600 political prisoners were released. Many Syrians hoped that when **Bashar al-Asad** became president in July 2000 he would improve the human rights situation, and in the first months of his presidency, a period known as the **Damascus Spring**, several reform associations mobilized to press for the lifting of the Emergency Law and respect for human rights. These groups included the Committee for the Defense of Democratic Freedoms and Human Rights in Syria and several associations promoting **civil society**. In November 2000, Bashar al-Asad granted amnesty to approximately 600 political prisoners to mark the 30th anniversary of the 1970 **Corrective Movement**; however, any

hopes that the new president would steer the country to a more liberal path were dashed in August–September 2001, when he promulgated a new draconian decree that reinforced and extended government powers to punish the expression of views deemed harmful to the state, the **armed forces**, and national unity. At the same time, the government unleashed a campaign to muzzle calls for reform by arresting leaders, including members of the People's Assembly. International criticism from the **United Nations** Human Rights Committee, Amnesty International, and Human Rights Watch apparently had no effect on the regime, which insisted that it was protecting its citizens from misguided individuals and malicious plots.

One institution that loomed large in human rights reports was the Supreme State Security Court, responsible for holding trials in political and national security cases. Human rights organizations condemned it for conducting sham trials to prosecute hundreds of activists. The court provided no due process and placed little emphasis on evidentiary support when convicting a defendant. In July 2008, the court was temporarily suspended in response to riots in Sednaya Prison, a notorious detention center for political advocates and dissidents. The court later blocked all information regarding the physical state and sentencing of rioters involved in the rebellion.

Throughout Bashar al-Asad's rule, security services have continued to detain people without disclosing their whereabouts to **family** members and concerned parties, and security personnel persist in torturing detainees. In fact, the regime has taken steps to authorize the use of torture for interrogations and punishments against dissidents. Syrian law does not define torture in accordance with the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture, nor does it restrict the actions of security directorates responsible for conducting interrogations.

Ensuring human rights and holding government officials and security personnel responsible for violating them have been two fundamental goals for demonstrators participating in the **Syrian Uprising** that erupted in March 2011. During the course of the uprising, both government and rebel forces have committed human rights violations, and lack of access for outside observers has made it difficult to verify many reported instances. To justify its resort to violent measures to suppress protests, the Asad regime has portrayed opposition forces as **Sunni** extremists bent on wiping out religious **minorities** and **terrorists** who summarily execute their captives. The opposition has alleged that regime forces have carried out massacres of defenseless civilians. Documented human rights violations committed by the regime include mass arrests, torture, denying medical assistance to wounded civilians, and killing demonstrators.

HUSAYN IBN ALI, SHARIF (c. 1853–1931). Chief religious dignitary of Mecca who organized the 1916 **Arab Revolt** against the **Ottoman Empire** and head of the **Hashemite** clan in the early 20th century. “Sharif” was the title of the local *amirs*, or princes, who claimed descent from the Prophet Muhammad and shared power with the Ottoman governor. Their primary responsibility was to act as custodians of the Meccan shrine and ensure the proper conduct of the pilgrimage. Husayn became the sharif of Mecca in November 1908, at the same time that Istanbul was seeking to establish firmer control of the empire’s provinces. For his part, Sharif Husayn strove to balance Mecca’s traditional autonomy with support for the Ottomans against rebellions in western Arabia. His ambition to secure his status in the holy city eventually blossomed into a plan for an Arab kingdom independent of the Ottoman Empire.

In February 1914, he had his son Abdallah contact British officials in Cairo to seek their support in the case that the Ottomans should try to remove him. Later that year, the Ottomans entered **World War I** against **Great Britain**, and Husayn further explored the possibility of British support for his position as an independent Arab ruler. There ensued a series of exchanges known as the **Husayn–McMahon Correspondence**, which laid the foundation for the Arab Revolt. The sharif hoped to establish an Arab kingdom over Arabia, Syria, and **Iraq**. By the end of the war, he realized his ambition of becoming king of Hijaz, in western Arabia, including the holy cities of Mecca and Medina, and his son, **Faysal ibn Husayn al-Hashimi**, established a short-lived government in Syria, but the **French** drove Faysal out of Syria in 1920, and four years later, the rising Saudi state of central Arabia drove Husayn out of his kingdom. He died in Amman, **Transjordan**, in 1931.

HUSAYN–MCMAHON CORRESPONDENCE. A series of letters exchanged between Sharif **Husayn ibn Ali** and Sir Henry McMahon, British high commissioner in **Egypt**, between July 1915 and March 1916. In this exchange, Husayn sought a British commitment to support the creation of an independent Arab kingdom that would encompass the **Ottoman** Arab provinces east of Egypt. The British wanted Husayn to launch an **Arab Revolt** that would sap Ottoman power (**Great Britain** and the Ottoman Empire were **World War I** adversaries) and dilute Muslim sympathy for the empire’s war efforts.

The correspondents failed to agree on the extent of the proposed Arab kingdom because Britain had to consider its ally **France’s** ambition to establish a sphere of influence over Syria. As a result, McMahon explicitly excluded coastal Syria, the districts west of **Aleppo**, **Hama**, **Homs**, and **Damascus**, roughly from **Alexandretta** to Beirut. Nonetheless, Sharif Husayn proceeded to launch the Arab Revolt in June 1916. After the war, the British acquiesced to France’s demand to control all of Syria, an act that Arabs have

always considered to be a violation of Britain's pledges in the correspondence to support an independent Arab kingdom. *See also* HASHEMITES; SYKES-PICOT AGREEMENT.

IBN ABI USAYBIʿA (c. 1200–1270). Physician and historian. During the height of medical scholarship in medieval Syria, the Nuri **bimaristan** (hospital) in **Damascus** boasted a number of outstanding physician-scholars. Muwaffaq al-Din ibn Abi Usaybiʿa wrote medical works on such subjects as bonesetting, but his significance for historians rests in a work on the lives of nearly 400 physicians and scholars. After studies under his father and other scholars, he worked at hospitals in Damascus and Cairo before joining the court of an **Ayyubid** prince at Salkhad in **Jabal Druze**.

IBN TAYMIYYA, TAQI AL-DIN AHMAD (1263–1328). Renowned religious scholar whose intellectual influence was revived in the 19th century and has resonated in the Muslim world ever since. Ibn Taymiyya was born in Harran (in present-day **Turkey**), but his **family** had to flee in 1269 because of the **Mongol** threat, and they settled in **Mamluk Damascus**, where Ibn Taymiyya spent most of his life. He entered into many religious controversies and gained a popular following for his exhortations to participate in jihad against the Mongols and the Twelver **Shiʿis** in **Lebanon**. On a number of occasions, rival **ulama** incited the Mamluk authorities against him, and he endured several periods of imprisonment in Cairo and Damascus. In fact, he died a prisoner in the citadel of Damascus.

Ibn Taymiyya wrote prolifically in several fields of **Islamic** scholarship, particularly theology, law, doctrine, and heresiography. The modern revival of his teachings stems at least in part from the **Wahhabi Movement's** adoption of his views in the 18th century, followed by the **Salafiyya** movement's propagation of them in the late 1800s. Ibn Taymiyya's works remain widely popular throughout the Arab world among **Islamic fundamentalist** groups.

IBRAHIM PASHA (1789–1848). Leader of **Egyptian** forces that invaded and occupied Syria from 1831 to 1840. Ibrahim's previous military achievements included the subjugation of rebels in Upper Egypt to the rule of his father, **Muhammad Ali**, and the quelling of anti-**Ottoman** revolts in Arabia and Greece. He commanded Egyptian forces invading **Palestine** in Novem-

ber 1831, and took **Damascus** on 2 June 1832. The following month, his troops routed Ottoman forces at a battle near **Homs**. Soon thereafter, all of Syria was under Egyptian rule, and the Ottomans formally recognized Muhammad Ali's authority in May 1833, in return for annual tribute.

The powerful Egyptian Army, modeled on early 19th-century European armies, brought a higher degree of security and order to the Syrian countryside, particularly in curbing the **Bedouin**. The Egyptian occupation also improved the status of Syrian **Christians**, included their representatives in local consultative councils, and even designated Christians to head the councils in Damascus and **Aleppo**. Such measures fostered a climate more favorable to **trade** with Europe, and, in 1833, Ibrahim allowed the establishment of a British consulate in Damascus. Furthermore, the Egyptian regime encouraged economic growth by introducing new crops, extending the margins of cultivation, and providing assistance to peasants. Ibrahim also promoted **education** by creating primary and secondary schools; setting up military colleges in Damascus, Aleppo, and Antioch; and allowing more mission schools.

In general, Ibrahim tried to reproduce in Syria the strong central authority his father had imposed on Egypt. This entailed the reorganization and centralization of administration, regular taxation, conscription, and disarming the population. The imposition of a head tax galled Muslims, who considered such a tax equivalent to the traditional levy on Christians and **Jews**. Uprisings against these measures erupted among **Druze** in the south and **Alawis** in the northwest. Discontent among **Sunni** townsmen swirled around the Egyptians' favorable treatment of Christians. Finally, all Syrians resented heavy new taxes to pay for a large army of occupation. Encouraged by local revolts, the Ottomans resumed war against Ibrahim in June 1839, but he defeated them yet again. This time, however, an alliance of European powers intervened to compel Ibrahim to evacuate Syria. In return, the Ottomans offered to designate Muhammad Ali the hereditary governor of Egypt. Ibrahim personally led the Egyptian withdrawal in the closing days of 1840, and Ottoman rule was restored to Syria.

IDLIB. This town of about 100,000 in northwestern Syria is at the center of a rich **agricultural** region dependent on rain for orchards and crops. Idlib lies approximately 70 kilometers southwest of **Aleppo** and 30 kilometers south of the border with **Turkey**, giving it strategic importance in the struggle between opposition and government forces in the **Syrian Uprising**.

IMAM. An Arabic term for the leader of Muslim congregational prayer, it also has special connotations for **Shi'i** Muslims. In their usage, the imam is the legitimate spiritual and political head of the Muslim community. They

regard **Ali ibn Abi Talib** as the first imam and his male descendants as successors to that status. In the first three Islamic centuries, Shi'is disagreed about the identity of the imam, particularly following the death of the sixth imam, Ja'far al-Sadiq. From these differences arose a variety of Shi'i sects, including the Twelvers, **Isma'ilis**, **Nizaris**, and **Qarmatis**, as well as such offshoots of Shi'ism as the **Druzes** and the **Alawis**.

INDIA. Economic and political ties between Syria and India have strengthened under President **Bashar al-Asad**. India is one of the world's largest consumers and importers of phosphate, making investment in Syrian mines an attractive enterprise. Government officials sought to broaden joint **industrial** ventures in cement, fertilizer, **education**, and **agricultural** processing. India also became an important customer of Syrian oil. In 2008, exports of **petroleum** products to India accounted for 50 percent of Syrian revenue from that source. India also assisted Syria in expanding its information technology sector with training for technicians and engineers.

On 17 June 2008, Bashar al-Asad embarked on his first state visit to India, where he met with President Pratibha Patil and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. The Syrian leader expressed high expectations and engaged in talks with President Patil on topics ranging from **trade** relations to **terrorism**. President Asad called on India to play a larger role in peace negotiations between Syria and **Israel**, citing New Delhi's position as a traditional supporter of the Arab cause while maintaining friendly relations with Israel. During the state visit, both leaders spoke of a need for collaboration on educational initiatives. In November 2010, President Patil arrived in **Damascus** for a four-day state visit to meet with Syrian government officials. During her stay, she discussed the future of bilateral relations and authorized several initiatives aimed at expanding economic and commercial cooperation. The visit was part of a broader initiative to advance Indian influence in Middle East affairs. Patil voiced support for an Arab peace solution based on **United Nations (UN)** resolutions and supported the return of the **Golan Heights** to Syria.

In 2011, India was president of the UN Security Council and therefore had a hand in shaping the early international response to the **Syrian Uprising**. At first, New Delhi resisted efforts by UN members aimed at sanctioning and denouncing Syrian government officials. As time passed, however, the mounting toll of civilian deaths at the hands of government forces led the country to join others in condemning the Asad regime. On 3 August 2011, in a sign of Syria's growing international isolation, India's representative to the UN read out a Security Council statement condemning Asad for ordering military action against protesters. *See also* FOREIGN POLICY.

INDUSTRY. In medieval times, Syrian manufactures acquired broad fame for their high-quality craftsmanship and technical ingenuity. **Damascus** steel was prized for swords and armor, and weavers spun fine blends of cotton and silk for the urban elite. For centuries, the major industry consisted of cotton, wool, and silk textiles manufactured in **Aleppo**, **Damascus**, **Homs**, and **Hama**. Artisans manufactured both luxury cloths and ordinary textiles for use as clothing and household furnishings. Metal, glass, and leather products were also important in traditional industry. Modern industry appeared in the late 1920s in the fields of cement, textiles, and food processing. Forty years later, Syrian industry was still concentrated in textiles, processed foods, soap, matches, glass, and cement.

The heyday of private industry abruptly ended under the **United Arab Republic** in July 1961, when Gamal Abd al-Nasser issued the sweeping **Socialist Decrees** nationalizing **banks**, insurance companies, and large industrial firms, affecting nearly 80 firms. The **secessionist** cabinet of **Ma'ruf al-Dawalibi** rescinded the measures the following year, but the **Ba'th Party** regime settled the fate of private industry for at least a generation with a series of measures in 1965 that nationalized wholly, and in part, more than 100 businesses.

Private investment in industry gained new breathing space in the 1970s under **Hafiz al-Asad's** regime, which allowed foreign participation in large ventures and increased public investment in industrial development. Consequently, during the 1970s, industry grew fairly rapidly at around 13 percent per year. New industrial enterprises in the 1980s included oil refineries, and factories producing fertilizer, cement, and paper. In the field of food processing, new investment in sugar refineries led to higher output. To the older cement factories in Aleppo and Hama, Syria added two new ones in **Tartus** and Adra around 1980, allowing a doubling of production. Phosphate deposits are present in the desert near **Palmyra**, and a phosphate fertilizer plant was built near Homs to exploit this resource. Phosphate plants in the Homs region produce fertilizer for domestic consumption and export. An indication of the growing importance of industry under Ba'th Party rule was the increase in its share of the **labor force** from 20 percent in 1965 to 30 percent in 1990.

State control of large industry was supposed to rationalize the allocation of scarce capital and resources to maximize productivity and achieve optimal distribution of benefits among producers and consumers. Instead, **public-sector** companies operated according to political rather than economic criteria and failed to contribute much to the country's economic development. One positive result was the dispersal of manufacturing centers among several regions rather than their concentration in one or two cities. Thus, the medium-sized town of Hama became the center of iron, cement, and textile

production, and Homs the site of fertilizer manufacturers that exploit phosphates mined near Palmyra. The newest and largest oil refinery is at the coastal town of **Baniyas**.

Under President **Bashar al-Asad**, efforts to increase industrial output by increasing private-sector participation were hampered by several factors, including underdeveloped financial mechanisms, bureaucratic hurdles to registering companies, complex regulatory rules, and weak infrastructure. The 2006–2010 **Five-Year Plan** set ambitious goals for raising levels of manufacturing—with an annual growth rate of 15 percent—without indicating precisely how government ministries, public-sector companies, and business organizations were to combine their efforts to achieve such goals. A Syrian Investment Authority was established in 2007, to streamline procedures for setting up new enterprises, but it lacked the authority to cut through the red tape of ministries that regulate economic activities. Moreover, failure to modernize Syria's important textile sector meant that it lagged behind more competitive producers in Asian and East European countries. The outbreak of the **Syrian Uprising** in 2011 has had devastating effects on the **economy**, including each of the industrial sectors.

INFLATION. During the last 50 years, the Syrian **economy** has been buffeted by periods of high inflation. While analysts question the accuracy of official statistics, it is possible to describe in broad strokes the main patterns of price fluctuations. During the 1960s, **Ba'th Party** regimes established government control of large portions of the economy, which had the effect of triggering a massive flight of private capital out of the country. In spite of these disruptions, it is estimated that inflation averaged about 3 percent per year. The mid-1970s was a time of sharp inflation, with annual rates in the range of 20 percent per year. This spike was caused by several factors, including global inflation pursuant to the rise in **energy** costs and such local events as the arrival of 400,000 **refugees** fleeing the **Lebanese Civil War**. The government attempted to mitigate the effects of inflation on poor Syrians by controlling prices on select items.

The 1980s were a decade of stubbornly high inflation, usually between 15 and 20 percent per year. Price increases were especially burdensome on **public-sector** employees and civil servants, whose wage increases trailed the inflation rate. A combination of austerity measures and slow economic growth in the late 1990s finally brought inflation down from 16 percent in 1993 to about 1 percent in 2000.

The Syrian economy saw wild fluctuations in inflation in the early 2000s. The inflation rate rose to 12 percent in 2004 and 2005, before falling to 8 percent in 2006. It rose again to 12 percent in 2007, and 16 percent in 2008,

before deflation set in at -2.8 percent in 2009. During the **Syrian Uprising**, international sanctions and unrest have caused the economy to contract and raised inflation to 31.5 percent in 2012. *See also* CURRENCY.

INTERNET. Before 1997, the Internet was banned because of the **Ba`th Party** regime's desire to control the flow of information in and out of Syria. The government initially permitted **public-sector** companies and ministries and then a few private businesses to use the Internet through a single portal operated by the public sector Syrian Telecommunications Establishment.

Not long after becoming president in July 2000, **Bashar al-Asad** pushed the door open a bit wider by allowing some Internet cafes to operate, but Syrians were still unable to access the Internet from their homes. Before succeeding his father, Bashar had headed the Syria Computer Society, a sign of his interest in technological advancement. He wanted to move quickly to increase Internet connections from just 7,000 at universities and hotels to 200,000 in one year, but, by the end of 2001, there were probably only approximately 30,000 connections and still a single provider. Personal computers were fairly rare in 2000, with only about 15 per 1,000 people.

The authorities feared the Internet's potential for political subversion, so it was not surprising that the regime routinely blocked websites and tried to keep tabs on e-mail. In 2006, Reporters without Borders listed Syria among the top 13 most restrictive countries in terms of media **censorship** and mistreatment of cyberdissidents. Testing conducted by the Open Net Initiative in 2009 reported that government filtering had expanded to target such social media sites and video-sharing groups as Facebook, YouTube, and Amazon, thwarting Syrians' eager to access them. A wide range of political and informational webpages were blocked due to their political content.

The government also restricted online access with a set of Internet Café Laws that limited access to state-controlled Internet services through privately owned business, for example, local cafés and restaurants. The laws required patrons to provide their full names, identification cards, and the names of parents before being able to log on. Businesses had to keep detailed records of Internet users to present to state authorities upon request or incur heavy fines or a prison sentence. The government proposed new legislation in 2010 that allowed the Ministry of Information to monitor media sources and authorized police to enter editorial offices, seize computers, and detain journalists for violating censorship laws.

In 2011, there were 14 Internet service providers, 420 Internet hosts, and 4,469,000 Internet users. Most Internet connections remained slow, and broadband access was limited due to high costs. The Asad regime restricted the way that broadband services could be used, specifically banning voice and video communication via the Internet. Several government agencies conducted surveillance using Western technology to inspect individuals' Web

history and online activities. On 8 February 2011, government officials lifted the ban on several social networking sites, including Facebook. While supporters of the regime interpreted the measure as a positive step to ease censorship on Internet use, critics argued that it was part of an attempt to track dissidents and opposition activities. On the eve of the 2011 **Syrian Uprising**, a growing number of cyberdissidents were being harassed and imprisoned for posting controversial opinions online.

IRAN. Relations with Iran were of secondary importance to both countries during Syria's first few decades of independence. Mohammad Reza Shah (r. 1941–1979) adopted a decidedly pro-Western **foreign policy** that included warm ties with the **United States** and official relations with **Israel**, to which he sold **petroleum**. Bilateral relations assumed greater importance after the 1978–1979 Iranian revolution brought to power an Islamic regime opposed to American influence in the Middle East and one avowedly hostile to Israel.

When **Iraq** invaded Iran in September 1980, Syria took the side of non-Arab Iran against the rival **Ba`th Party** regime of Baghdad. President **Hafiz al-Asad's** policy isolated Syria in the Arab world, but it brought tangible benefits, primarily preferential deals for Iranian oil imports. Observers pointed out the ostensible anomaly of a close relationship between the Islamic Republic of Iran, avowedly dedicated to spreading **Islamic** revolution, and Ba`thist Syria, a secular regime combating an **Islamic fundamentalist** revolt led by the **Muslim Brotherhood**. In fact, a delegation of Syrian Muslim Brothers visited Tehran and met with Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, requesting that he support their struggle to overthrow Asad's regime. But despite the Islamic Republic's greater ideological affinity with the Muslim Brotherhood than with the Ba`th Party, Khomeini maintained a pragmatic foreign policy toward Syria, and the Muslim Brothers were left to draw the conclusion that they were victims of a **Shi'i** plot.

The **Lebanese War of 1982** further strengthened Syrian–Iranian relations. During the war, Syria permitted Iranian Revolutionary Guards to establish bases in the Bekaa Valley and organize **Lebanese Shi'is** into the **Hizballah** organization, which became a potent force in Lebanon's politics and its military struggle against the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon. There was a certain irony in Syria's facilitating the establishment of an Islamic party in Lebanon at the same time that the regime was battling Islamic fundamentalists at home, but Asad calculated that he could keep the two spheres separate. Hizballah's anti-Western actions suited Asad's strategy in Lebanon during the 1980s, when he confronted an Israeli–American bid to exclude Syria from Lebanon's political recovery. After Israel and the United States scaled down their involvement in Lebanese politics in the mid-1980s, friction between Syria and Hizballah intermittently strained Syria's relations

with Iran. Hizballah was financially dependent on Iran, and Iran's access to Lebanon was dependent on Syria, so Syria ultimately held the keys to Hizballah's fortunes.

The cooperative relationship between Iran and Syria persisted during the 1990s, in spite of tensions resulting from Syria's pursuit of a diplomatic settlement with Israel, while Iran hewed to a militant line. A related sore point was the Asad regime's occasional attempts to press Hizballah to limit attacks on Israeli forces in southern Lebanon when they threatened to disrupt the **Syrian–Israeli peace talks**. A second area of some difficulty for Tehran and **Damascus** was Iran's dispute with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) regarding three small islands in the Persian Gulf that Iran had occupied in the 1970s. Syria signed joint Arab statements demanding the return of the islands to UAE sovereignty. The Syrians and Iranians, however, did not allow these secondary policy disagreements to shake their warm relations based on more crucial interests. Thus, Hafiz al-Asad was the first foreign leader to visit Mohammad Khatami when he was elected president of Iran in 1997, and Khatami in turn traveled to Damascus in 1999, to shore up bilateral relations and cooperation on Hizballah's military resistance against Israel in Lebanon.

The bilateral relationship was solidified during **Bashar al-Asad's** rule by mutual defense pacts and weapons shipments. On 15 June 2006, Syrian defense minister **Hasan Turkmani** and Iranian counterpart General Mostafa Mohammad-Najjar signed a mutual defense pact establishing a permanent defense liaison commission known as the Iranian–Syrian Supreme Defense Commission. The commission was intended to provide a foundation for long-term military cooperation between the two countries to protect them from common threats, primarily the United States and Israel. The agreement was followed by Iran's \$1 billion donation of military assistance to Damascus for the procurement of fighter jets, tanks, and antiship missiles. On 26 May 2008, Syria and Iran signed a Memorandum of Understanding aimed at combating terrorism and regional threats.

In December 2009, Iranian defense minister Ahmad Vahidi, and his Syrian counterpart **Ali Habib Mahmud**, signed another military agreement. The accord came during a period of heightened tensions between Tehran and Washington: Just days after the agreement was made public, U.S. Congress members imposed new sanctions on Iran because of its controversial nuclear program. In August 2011, Tehran agreed to provide Damascus with \$23 million to construct a joint military base in the port city of **Latakia** to facilitate weapons shipments from Iran. The agreement promised to expand the Iranian presence in Syria, as Islamic Revolutionary Guard officers would be stationed at the base to oversee operations.

The strength of the security relationship led President Bashar al-Asad to repeatedly defend Iran's controversial nuclear program and offer to mediate negotiations between Tehran and Washington. In December 2009, after a meeting with Iranian nuclear negotiator Saeed Jalili, Asad affirmed Iran's right to enrich uranium for civilian purposes.

In addition to military and political cooperation, Syria and Iran maintained extensive economic ties. By 2008, Iranian investment in Syria amounted to about \$1.5 billion dollars. Prominent enterprises included three joint-venture automobile factories, a refinery contract worth close to \$2.6 billion dollars, and a natural gas agreement that allowed for the export of 3 billion cubic meters of gas per year to Syria. In 2008, Tehran was responsible for 10 percent of Syria's foreign direct investment. In February 2009, Syrian government officials announced the launching of a Syrian-Iranian commercial bank called Banki, which integrated the Commercial Bank of Syria and the Iranian Bank Saderat. Several corporations from both countries also participated in the initiative. The bank was expected to increase trade between the two countries. In March 2009, Tehran and Damascus reached agreement on preferential tariff regulations to boost bilateral **trade**. The deal was part of a wider effort to introduce a Free Trade Zone between Syria and Iran that was estimated to be worth nearly \$300 million. In April 2010, Iranian vice president Mohammad Reza Rahimi met with President Asad in Damascus to discuss the creation of a regional economic bloc aimed at furthering cooperation in trade and investment between the two countries. During a second visit, Rahimi and Asad signed a 17-article agreement aimed at facilitating investment in several Syrian **industries**, including naval and rail **transportation**, communication and information technology, **agriculture**, and **tourism**.

The Iranian government has stood firmly by the Asad regime during the **Syrian Uprising**, providing political, military, and economic support to prop up its primary ally in the Arab world. An opposition victory would be a major blow to Iran's position in the region and make it more difficult for it to bolster **Hizballah's** position in Lebanon.

IRAQ. During the first decade of Syria's independence, Iraq's **Hashemite** rulers sought to establish dominance in the Arab East by drawing Syria into their orbit through the **Fertile Crescent Plan**. Iraqi leaders courted Syrian politicians, in particular the pro-Iraqi **People's Party**, and provided them with funds to boost their status in the Syrian political arena. Iraqi intrigue contributed to the downfalls of **Husni al-Za'im** and **Adib al-Shishakli**, but pro-Iraqi politicians were never able to bring about unity between the two countries. **France**, **Egypt**, and **Saudi Arabia** opposed such a union, while **Great Britain** was cool to the notion.

In the fall of 1963, the **Ba'th Party** regimes in Iraq and Syria proposed a union of the two countries, but this initiative proved abortive because, on 18 November, a military coup removed the Ba'th from power in Iraq. Five years later, the Ba'th Party again seized power in Iraq, but the Iraqi Ba'th represented the faction that was loyal to **Michel Aflaq**, which had been violently driven from power in Syria by the **February 23, 1966 Coup**. Thus, two hostile factions of the same party inherited the pattern of troubled relations between **Damascus** and Baghdad. Notwithstanding ideological and personal animosities between the two regimes, during the **October 1973 War**, Iraq sent two armored divisions and infantry units to support Syrian troops fighting **Israel** in the **Golan Heights**, but when Syria agreed to a cease-fire, the Iraqis withdrew their forces to indicate their disapproval. Relations deteriorated again in 1975, in a dispute regarding **Euphrates River water**, and then briefly improved when Egypt made peace with Israel three years later. There were even new moves toward unity in late 1978 and early 1979, but they halted following the rise to power of Saddam Husayn in Baghdad in July 1979 and his accusation that Syria was plotting to subvert the government.

In September 1980, Iraq invaded **Iran** in a bid to overthrow the newly established Islamic Republic, which Baghdad's leaders accused of subversion. Syria immediately criticized Iraq for diverting Arab resources from the confrontation with Israel, and, in retaliation, Iraq severed relations. April 1982 saw the final steps on the road to a break between Damascus and Baghdad: Syria closed the border, shut down the **Iraqi-Syrian pipeline**, and finally severed diplomatic relations on 18 April. When Iraq emerged victorious at war's end in July 1988, Saddam Husayn sought to punish **Hafiz al-Asad** for supporting Iran by sending arms to General Michel Aoun, who, at the time, was seeking to expel Syria from **Lebanon**.

After Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990, Asad struck back at Husayn by siding with the **United States** and its Arab coalition partners, who invited Western intervention to expel the Iraqis. In September, Syria sent 20,000 troops to Saudi Arabia, ostensibly to defend the kingdom against Iraqi attack. These troops did not participate in the assault on Iraq, but, for a time, it appeared that the Iraqi threat would lead to a joint force of Syrian and Egyptian troops to defend the Gulf Arab states. The Saudis and Kuwaitis, however, decided against a permanent Arab military presence and sent the Syrian soldiers home.

One of the more notable shifts in Syrian **foreign policy** in the late 1990s was a rapprochement with Iraq. The first crack in the wall of hostility came in early 1996, when low-level government officials met to discuss their common frustration with **Turkey's** reduction of the Euphrates River's flow into their countries. In 1997, the **United Nations (UN)** modified sanctions on Husayn's regime by instituting the Oil-for-Food Programme, and Syria re-

newed **trade** ties. Moreover, Asad felt that he needed added leverage against the new Israel–Turkey axis sealed by a formal military pact. Iraq wished to break out of the isolation it endured for failing to implement UN resolutions passed at the end of the Gulf War; therefore, the rival Ba`thist regimes exchanged diplomatic missions and permitted the resumption of trade across their borders. Syrian vendors gained access to Iraqi markets for food and medical supplies; Iraqi exports arrived at **Tartus** and **Latakia**; and the pipeline from Kirkuk to **Baniyas**, closed since 1982, was reopened. The thaw in relations went further than signing formal commercial agreements. Syria made such important political gestures as shutting down radio broadcasts by Iraqi dissidents and airing frequent criticism of U.S. air attacks on Iraqi military targets.

When **Bashar al-Asad** became president in 2000, he continued the policy of eroding UN sanctions on Iraq. He cooperated with the Egyptian government to increase trade and improve political ties to Baghdad. In the summer of 2000, the railway between Iraq and **Aleppo** reopened. In early 2001, direct flights between Damascus and Baghdad resumed for the first time since 1980. Of greatest concern to the United States was Syria's flouting of UN rules on oil for food. In the fall of 2000, it was estimated that Syria was purchasing between 100,000 and 150,000 barrels of **petroleum** per day at a discounted price, thus allowing Damascus to increase its foreign exchange earnings by exporting a larger quantity of its own petroleum production. American efforts in 2001 to persuade Syria to comply with UN rules on oil for food elicited a disingenuous denial of breaking those rules.

Strategic considerations spawned this new chapter in Syrian–Iraqi relations. The initial phase coincided with a lull in **Syrian–Israeli peace talks** when Benjamin Netanyahu was elected prime minister in 1996. After Bashar al-Asad became president in 2000, foreign policy remained in the hands of veterans the likes of **Faruq al-Shara'** and **Abd al-Halim al-Khaddam**, and they resorted to the senior Asad's typical balancing tactic against increasingly belligerent U.S. and Israeli postures by reaching out to Baghdad. Syria's relations with the United States entered a difficult passage in the fall of 2002, when Washington was campaigning for a new UN resolution to bring Iraq into compliance on inspections for weapons of mass destruction. At the time, Syria was a rotating member of the Security Council and voted in favor of Resolution 1441, even though popular opinion at home was opposed to what many viewed as American bullying and hypocrisy. But when the United States invaded Iraq in March 2003, the Syrian government condemned the move and called for Arab solidarity with the Iraqi people.

During the U.S. occupation of Iraq, relations between the new government of Iraq and Syria were cool at first, as Iraqi leaders accused the Asad regime of working to destabilize Iraq by permitting **Sunni** insurgents to cross the border. American military officials reported the establishment in Damascus

of special stations for foreigners to volunteer for armed resistance in the name of jihad. They asserted that Syrian intelligence was providing volunteers with funds, weapons, and training, as well as assisting their infiltration into Iraq. The Syrian government responded to these accusations by maintaining that it lacked the manpower to control the border.

Given that many Iraqi officials found refuge in Syria during Saddam Husayn's rule, the Syrian government was able to develop ties with individuals that it used as a foundation to foster relations with the new Iraqi government. Two examples are Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki, who lived in Syria for 20 years, and President Jalal Talabani, who carried a Syrian passport until 2004. In 2006, relations between the two countries were formally reestablished when Syrian foreign minister **Walid al-Mu'allim** went to Iraq on the first official diplomatic visit since the fall of Husayn. In 2008, Syria sent Ambassador Nawaf Abbud al-Shaykh Faris to Iraq. Despite the renewal of relations, the United States accused Syria of not taking effective measures to stop insurgents from crossing into Iraq. Syria also refused to stop giving sanctuary to members of Iraq's old Ba'thist party, maintaining that these individuals were not responsible for insurgent violence.

The brutal insurgency and sectarian war that engulfed Iraq after the U.S. invasion triggered the flight of millions of Iraqis. Approximately 1.5 million Iraqis found refuge in Syria. The majority of **refugees** lived in major urban centers, often in unsanitary conditions. International humanitarian organizations, including the Syrian Arab Red Crescent, United Nations World Food Programme, and United Nations Refugee Agency, supplied food, water, and shelter. The cost of hosting so many refugees put additional strains on the Syrian **economy**, particularly its public service sector. In 2007, Damascus closed the border to new refugees and began issuing visas that stipulated that refugees eventually return home. Restrictions were later placed on the purchase of property and access to free medical care to ensure that Iraqi citizens would not permanently settle in Syria. As security conditions improved in Iraq, the Syrian government undertook efforts to facilitate the repatriation of thousands of **families**. Free airplane tickets and financial compensation were used to encourage refugees to return to their homeland.

In August 2009, relations between the two countries deteriorated after an Iraqi Ba'thist leader in Syria, Sattam Farhan, was accused of ordering the detonation of bombs that killed 100 people in Baghdad at the defense, foreign, and finance ministries. While Syria condemned the attack, it failed to extradite Farhan to Iraq after the Iraqi government demanded that he be handed over. In response, Iraq recalled its ambassador from Syria, to which Syria retaliated by recalling its ambassador. This phase lasted a year before Syria and Iraq exchanged ambassadors in the fall of 2010 and began to work on economic cooperation to revive their stagnant economies.

In October 2010, Iraqi prime minister Nuri al-Maliki arrived in Damascus to sign a memorandum of understanding aimed at boosting cooperation in the oil and gas sectors. Government officials on both sides revitalized stalled business agreements and participated in joint ministerial conferences to enhance regional economic development. A new rail line was created linking the Mediterranean ports of Tartus and Latakia with Basra on the Persian Gulf. Reconciliation with Iraq also allowed Syria to advance its Five Seas project, an initiative aimed at building economic and political connections among countries along the Caspian, Black, Mediterranean, and Red seas.

The **Shi'i**-dominated government of Iraq has viewed the **Syrian Uprising** through sectarian lenses and supported the Asad regime, fearing that its overthrow would strengthen Sunni factions in Iraq. As the strife in Syria became more of a sectarian civil war in 2012 and 2013, it threatened to reignite communal violence in Iraq, which had ravaged the country from 2004 to 2008.

IRAQI-SYRIAN PIPELINE. In 1952, the pipeline began delivery of **petroleum** from Kirkuk, in northern **Iraq**, to the central Syrian town of **Homs**, and from there to the Mediterranean ports of **Baniyas** in Syria and Tripoli in **Lebanon**. From 1968 to 1973, Iraq and Syria bickered over the latter's demand for a large increase in the transit fee. This led the Iraqis to develop alternative pipelines to **Turkey** and the Gulf. In April 1976, Iraq stopped sending oil through the pipeline for nearly three years. After Syria sided with **Iran** against Iraq in the Gulf War, it closed the pipeline on 10 April 1982. A rapprochement between Baghdad and **Damascus** led to its reopening after Syrian and Iraqi oil ministers exchanged visits in the summer of 1998. The **United States** viewed this step as a violation of the **United Nations** resolution governing the Oil-for-Food Programme. In 2003, American warplanes bombed the pipeline when the United States invaded Iraq. The **Russian** firm Stroytransgaz was hired to repair the pipeline in 2008. Unfortunately, Stroytransgaz failed to do the job, and Syria and Iraq agreed to build two new pipelines rather than attempting to repair the damaged one.

IRON HAND SOCIETY. The first nationalist group to emerge in **Damascus** under the **French Mandate**. It was led by **Abd al-Rahman Shahbandar**, who organized its spread to **Homs** and **Hama**. In **Aleppo**, a similar organization called the Red Hand Society also agitated against **French** rule. The French arrested Shahbandar and other members in 1922 and suppressed the society.

ISLAM. Since the Arab conquest in the 7th century, Islam has been the **religion** of the ruling authorities except for the country's coastal regions during the **Crusades**. The majority of the population converted to the new monotheistic religion by the early 10th century, but its doctrine of toleration for other Abrahamic faiths ensured their survival. The basic teaching of Islam is that one God, called *Allah* in Arabic, is the creator and that he sent a series of messengers to humanity to reveal his will and the otherwise unknowable destiny of humans in the afterlife. These messengers include Abraham, Noah, Moses, Jesus, and others familiar to **Jews** and **Christians**. Muslims believe that the last messenger was Muhammad, a resident of Mecca in the early 7th century whose recitation of divine revelations comprise the Qur'an and whose exemplary behavior, or *Sunna*, sets a model for believers in his message. The Muslim Prophet endured persecution in Mecca for propagating a new faith and immigrated with his followers to Medina, where he consolidated the Muslims as an autonomous, dynamic community that vanquished his adversaries and established the first Muslim polity.

Not long after Muhammad's death in 632, his community divided over the question of leadership into tendencies that evolved into **Sunni** and **Shi'i** sects. The power of these sects has fluctuated. In the 10th and 11th centuries, different Shi'i dynasties held sway in much of the country, but the **Saljuk** Turks began a Sunni revival that eventually pushed Shi'is to the geographical periphery—remote mountain regions—where they have remained ever since.

In addition to Islam's political centrality, its ritual and doctrinal facets have left a huge imprint on Syria's history. Rulers and townsmen constructed grand and modest mosques where believers can perform the obligatory prayers. **Damascus** assumed a key role as staging point for the annual pilgrimage to Mecca, an event that brought marked economic benefits to the city and surrounding areas. **Educational** institutions evolved to meet religious expectations and needs. Qur'an schools taught young children to memorize the holy book, and **madrasas** trained advanced pupils in a range of Islamic sciences that qualified the brightest to interpret **shari'a**, Islamic law. In the major cities, wealthy patrons created endowments (**waqfs**) for the madrasas, which often assumed splendid **architectural** form as emblems of the community's commitment to preserving sacred learning.

Overlapping with the scholastic tradition, Syria has had a vibrant tradition of mystical orders known as **Sufi** brotherhoods since their emergence in the 13th century. The brotherhoods vary in character; some are urban, others are rural; some cater to educated townsmen, others to illiterate believers. Damascus contains the tomb of one of Islamic mysticism's most celebrated figures, Muhyi al-Din Ibn Arabi, the author of sophisticated meditations on the relationship between the human and the divine. In more recent times, another Sufi immigrant to Damascus, Khalid al-Naqshbandi (d. 1826), established a

revivalist tradition in Syria that continues to influence both contemporary Sufis and **Islamic fundamentalists** in organizations like the **Muslim Brotherhood**.

In numerous aspects of daily life, Muslims conformed to the requirements of shari`a, including marriage, divorce, burial, inheritance, commerce, charity, and **art**, but to assert that Islam regulated all aspects of life is an exaggeration and even an idealization of the past by contemporary Islamic fundamentalist ideologues. Nonetheless, premodern Syrian society, particularly in the towns, bore a strong religious imprint.

The modern era, however, has redefined religion throughout the world, and Syria is no exception. The first moves to narrow Islam's sway occurred in the era of **Ottoman** reform known as **Tanzimat**. Initiatives in law and education created a bifurcation between religious and secular subcultures that has not gone away. The **French Mandate** and a sequence of regimes since independence widened the secular sphere, but a religious reaction challenged this historical tendency, starting in the late Ottoman period and culminating with an armed uprising by Islamic fundamentalists against the secular nationalist **Ba`th Party** regime in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Since the fierce suppression of that uprising's last eruption at **Hama** in 1982, the place of Islam in public life has not been openly debated inside the country, but it remains an unsettled question for Syrians uncomfortable with a secular regime.

The outbreak of the **Syrian Uprising** in the spring of 2011 revived the question of religion's role, in large part because many Syrians view the Ba`th Party regime as an instrument of the country's **Alawi minority** ruling at the expense of the Sunni majority. Although the uprising began as protests for political reform, its development into a violent civil war has accentuated sectarian divisions and brought to prominence religious extremists seeking the establishment of a puritanical Islamic system. Consequently, non-Muslims have tended to rally to the support of the government; therefore, the future role of Islam in Syrian life will depend on the outcome of the struggle between the government and the opposition. *See also* DRUZES; ISMA`ILI; NIZARI.

ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISM. In the 20th century, much of the Muslim world witnessed the surfacing of a new form of religious activism that is commonly referred to as Islamic fundamentalism. The hallmarks of this trend are the call for observing what its proponents consider correct forms of worship and morality, along with opposition to secular tendencies in law and government. To the extent that it claims to seek a return to correct religious belief and practice, Islamic fundamentalism is similar to revivalist movements in earlier periods of **Islamic** civilization. The stamp of modernity, however, is evident in Islamic fundamentalism's organizational forms, ideo-

logical formulations, and political aspirations. In short, it is not a traditional form of Islam, but an expression of traditionalism, the idea that Muslims must preserve certain traditions and discard others. Moreover, it is important to distinguish between fundamentalism with its activist character and the much more common phenomenon of piety without a political or public agenda.

In Syria, a cluster of fundamentalist themes appeared among **Sunni** Muslims in the late **Ottoman** period. Sultan **Abdulhamid II** attracted support for policies that emphasized the Ottoman Empire's Islamic character and diminished the secular cast of the **Tanzimat** period. The first call for a return to proper religious practice and belief issued from Syrian **ulama** in the **Sala-fiyya** movement. Also during the Ottoman period, conservative ulama published the first periodical to address fundamentalist issues like criticism of knee-jerk imitation of European culture.

During the **French Mandate** period, the impulse to shelter indigenous culture against the occupying foreigner found expression in avowedly Islamic societies in the main cities in the 1920s and 1930s. They combated such vices as alcohol and gambling, the influence of **Christian** missionary schools, and public mixing of men and **women** at dances and **cinemas**. Members of these groups gravitated to the **Muslim Brotherhood**, a movement that originated in **Egypt** in 1928, and established a Syrian branch in 1946.

In the early years of independence, the fundamentalist movement, largely represented by the Muslim Brotherhood, combated the spread of Western forms of consumption and entertainment. In the 1950s, the Muslim Brotherhood adopted a more explicit political posture when it opposed the growing influence of socialist and communist trends. The high point for fundamentalist activism occurred when the avowedly secular **Ba'th Party** seized power in 1963. For nearly 20 years, Ba'thist regimes confronted persistent criticism and, at times, violent opposition from the Muslim Brotherhood and smaller fundamentalist groups, including the Vanguard of Muhammad and the Islamic Liberation Party. During the countrywide disturbances between 1978 and 1982, the fundamentalist movement split. On one side were those who believed that it was necessary to resort to violence to overthrow the Ba'thist regime, which they considered a tool of the **minority Alawi** sect to which President **Hafiz al-Asad** belonged. On the other side were those like **Sa'id al-Hawwa**, who argued that the regime was too powerful to dislodge and that armed struggle would be self-destructive. The latter view proved correct. One of the more discouraging facets of that period for Islamic fundamentalists was the prospect of an avowedly Islamic regime in **Iran** forming a strategic alliance with the secular Ba'thists at the very moment when the latter were ruthlessly suppressing Syrians seeking to create an Islamic regime in **Damascus**.

During the late 1970s and early 1980s, President Asad's repressive forces arrested hundreds of members and suspected members of fundamentalist groups. Other members and sympathizers fled the country. After the February 1982 uprising at **Hama**, the climax of fundamentalist assertion in Syria, the movement underwent further schisms and then efforts to heal them. The headquarters of fundamentalist organizations relocated to Europe. The Asad regime offered amnesty to key figures in exchange for a pledge to refrain from political activity. Syria's secularist order had suppressed and tamed the Islamic fundamentalists. Nonetheless, the late 1980s and 1990s did not see Syrian Muslims completely embrace Western culture and manners. Rather, public culture demonstrated an eclectic mix of personal piety in dress and habit by Muslims who might or might not also quietly harbor fundamentalist aspirations of overturning the secular trend if political conditions offered the opportunity.

Bashar al-Asad's rule witnessed swings in national mood between renewed piety and secularism. The U.S. invasion of Iraq, **Hizballah's** ability to withstand repeated **Israeli** assaults, and the growing popularity of **Hamas** among **Palestinians** strengthened the hands of Islamic groups throughout the region and stimulated a revival of piety. Asad tried to harness religious sentiment for political purposes by promoting a moderate version of Islam that would harmonize with the country's multiconfessional population. For its part, the Islamic fundamentalist Muslim Brotherhood continued to oppose the Asad regime from exile but was unable to reestablish itself inside the country.

During the **Syrian Uprising** that began in March 2011, Islamic fundamentalist sentiment has grown stronger inside the country, and the Muslim Brotherhood has emerged as an influential faction in opposition organizations that have sprung up outside the country. As the uprising took on the face of a sectarian conflict between the Alawi minority and Sunni Muslims, Islamic fundamentalist militias assumed a greater role in combating government forces, and they have been able to assert their authority over areas that have come under their control. Whether the liberal, pluralist agenda embraced by segments of the opposition can outmaneuver Islamic forces at the same time both wage a protracted war against the government remains an open question.

ISMA'ILI. A Shi'i Muslim sect whose members have long lived in parts of central Syria in the vicinity of **Hama** and in **Latakia** province. Its members account for about 1.5 percent of the population. This Shi'i sect gave rise to several important movements and dynasties in the 10th and 11th centuries, including the **Fatimids**, **Nizaris**, and **Qarmatis**. The Isma'ilis differed with other Shi'is over succession to the sixth **imam**, Ja'far al-Sadiq, who died in 765. Some of Ja'far's followers believed that he had designated his son

Isma'il to succeed him, but Isma'il predeceased his father, and Isma'il's party then split into two groups. The first held that the line of imams had ended with Isma'il; that he was still alive; and that he would return as the *mahdi*, the messianic figure in popular Islam who would inaugurate a millennial reign of justice. The second party believed that Isma'il's son Muhammad was the true imam. When he died, his followers divided into two more sects. Some paid allegiance to Muhammad as the last imam, who would return as the *mahdi*. This group became the Qarmatis. Others supported the claim of a certain Ubayd Allah that he was a direct descendant of Muhammad ibn Isma'il and the rightful imam. This figure established the Fatimid movement, which founded a dynasty in North Africa in 909, and later conquered **Egypt** and Syria. In the late 11th century, a schism arose in Fatimid Isma'ilism when the Nizaris broke away and founded their own state based in **Iran** with loyal bases scattered in parts of central Syria.

During early modern times, a few thousand Isma'ilis were concentrated in villages in **Jabal Ansariyya**, particularly near the ancient fortresses of Qadmus and **Masyaf**. Endemic feuding with the more numerous **Alawis** of the region constituted a permanent threat to their prospects in that part of Syria. In 1849, the **Ottoman** authorities encouraged the Isma'ilis to immigrate to the district of **Salamiyya**, 30 kilometers southeast of **Hama**. In medieval times, the town had served as one of the sect's strongholds, and, in the 19th century, it became the center of a new Isma'ili region as immigrants from Jabal Ansariyya settled and revived villages east and west of Salamiyya. By 1940, Isma'ilis in the vicinity of Salamiyya numbered 16,000, compared with only 4,000 remaining in the mountains. There are presently 40,000 Isma'ilis in Salamiyya district and 15,000 in the mountains.

Isma'ilis occupied high-level government positions in the second **Ba'th Party** regime but were not privileged by the Asad regimes. On 24 August 2008, the Aga Khan met with President **Bashar al-Asad** as part of a six-day official visit to Syria. The Aga Khan is the hereditary title of the imam of the largest branch of Isma'ilis. The two leaders discussed new projects by the Aga Khan Development Network before the spiritual leader visited with Syrian Isma'ili followers.

In the early months of the **Syrian Uprising**, Salamiyya was the scene of antigovernment protests, and some Isma'ilis joined the opposition movement. As the uprising took on the hues of a sectarian civil war, however, they became targets of militant **Salafi** attacks, for instance, a January 2013 bombing in Salamiyya that killed more than 40 people.

ISRAEL. Much of Syria's history since 1948 has been deeply affected by the formation of a Jewish state in **Palestine**. Syria's **armed forces** fought in the **Palestine War of 1948**, but the small and poorly equipped army could do no more than occupy a sliver of territory that **France** and **Great Britain** had

attached to Palestine in 1920, but that Syria considered its own. With the conclusion of the **Armistice of 1949**, Syria and Israel agreed to designate the disputed territories **demilitarized zones (DMZs)** whose ultimate possession would be determined in later negotiations. Israel, however, pursued its claim to the DMZs by gradually taking them over by force. Syria resisted such moves, and armed clashes became commonplace. While Syrian leaders often called for reversing the verdict of the 1948 war, Israel's military superiority induced a cautious policy of containing conflict to small-scale fighting in the DMZs.

Such prudent policy, however, was abandoned under the **Ba`th Party** regimes of the 1960s. Indeed, the **Neo-Ba`th** regime adopted a provocative stance because some of its members favored a "people's war" modeled on the Algerian war for independence against France and the Vietnamese war against the **United States**. The **June 1967 War** erupted in the wake of a crisis generated by Syria's confrontations with Israel over the DMZs. Syria lost the **Golan Heights** to Israeli forces in the fighting, so the issue at stake grew from disputes over the bits of land in the DMZs to the much larger and far more strategically valuable Golan. **United Nations Resolution 242** provided for Syria's recovery of its territory in exchange for peace with Israel, but the Neo-Ba`th regime flatly rejected the measure.

The **Corrective Movement** brought **Hafiz al-Asad** to power in November 1970. He had been minister of defense during the 1967 war, thus he had additional personal motivation to retrieve Syria's lost territory. To pursue this aim, Asad allied with Egyptian president Anwar Sadat and launched the **October 1973 War**, in which Syrian forces briefly regained much of the Golan Heights, but then lost them and more territory to an Israeli counteroffensive. After the war, Syria and Israel accepted U.S. mediation that led to a 1974 separation of forces and the stationing of the **United Nations Disengagement Observer Force** in a buffer zone. Since then, no fighting between Syria and Israel has taken place on that front. Moreover, in 1975, Asad indicated his willingness to negotiate a peace treaty, but the Israelis mistrusted Syrian intentions and therefore showed little interest in exchanging land for peace. For their part, the Israelis regarded the continued occupation of at least part of the Heights as a necessary strategic buffer against any possible future Syrian attack.

Syria's position vis-à-vis Israel notably weakened when **Egypt** signed a separate peace treaty in 1979, making it possible for Israel to concentrate its formidable military might on its northern front. Syria then embarked on a massive arms buildup that lasted well into the 1980s and put a drag on the **economy**. The next major development was the **Lebanese War of 1982**. In June 1982, Israeli forces invaded **Lebanon** in an attempt to eliminate the **Palestine Liberation Organization** and bring Lebanon into Israel's sphere of influence. Israeli forces attacked Syrian units stationed in eastern Lebanon

but failed to dislodge them, and the two sides agreed to a cease-fire after a few days. For the next three years, Syria and Israel struggled to gain supremacy in Lebanon in the war's aftermath, and Syria prevailed, but the stalemate over the Golan Heights continued.

The first real breakthrough in diplomacy took place following Syria's participation in the coalition to evict **Iraq** from Kuwait and the rapid decline of the Soviet Union. A few months after the conclusion of Operation Desert Storm, President Asad dropped his insistence that the **United Nations (UN)** oversee negotiations and accepted the U.S. invitation to attend the **Madrid Conference**, an international peace meeting, to be held in October 1991, and then enter direct negotiations with Israel in Washington. Nine years of intermittent **Syrian-Israeli peace talks** brought substantial progress to resolving their differences, but a final settlement was not reached. Syria insisted on recovering all of the Golan Heights up to the 4 June 1967 line in return for a peace treaty. On the Israeli side, Labor Party governments came closest to meeting that condition, while Likud Party governments tended to view retention of the Golan Heights as essential to Israel's security. This was demonstrated when talks between Syria and Israel regarding the Golan Heights were held in 2008, under Labor Party prime minister Ehud Olmert, but they were not resumed after the Likud Party's Benjamin Netanyahu became prime minister in 2009.

While the early 21st century saw a number of chances at peace, it also witnessed moments of crisis caused by disputes over the Golan Heights, Lebanon, and Syria's backing for **Hizballah** and **Palestinian** militant organizations. In October 2003, Syrian support for Palestinian militants lay behind the first Israeli attack on Syrian territory since the October 1973 War. After a Palestinian **Islamic** jihad suicide bombing killed approximately 20 Israelis in Haifa, the Israeli Air Force bombed a training camp for Palestinian militants on the outskirts of **Damascus**. On the Lebanon front, the Shab'a Farms dispute originates from the June 1967 War, when Israel captured the Golan Heights. Israel claims that it took over the Shab'a Farms area during that war, but Syria contends that the land belongs to Lebanon. When Israel withdrew its forces from Lebanon in 2000, Hizballah launched attacks on Israeli forces in Shab'a Farms, claiming it remained unliberated Lebanese soil. In 2007, a UN commission determined that the disputed land was, in fact, Syrian territory. The Israeli Defense Forces were asked to evacuate, and the Shab'a Farms were placed under international jurisdiction to be controlled by the UN Interim Force in Lebanon.

Like the Shab'a Farms, the village of al-Ghajar, a mainly **Alawi** enclave, was a flashpoint between Israel and Hizballah because of conflicting views of whether it is Syrian or Lebanese. In 2005 and 2006, Hizballah launched several attacks on Israeli forces in the town, leading to the **Lebanese War of**

2006. In November 2010, Israel decided to split the town due to Lebanese objections. The northern portion of al-Ghajar is currently under Lebanese control, while the southern portion remains under Israeli occupation.

On 6 September 2007, Israel launched Operation Orchard, an aerial attack on a nuclear facility at al-Kibar, near **Dayr al-Zur**. The Asad regime denied that the site was a nuclear facility, but Israel produced photos taken from reconnaissance flights depicting installations that appeared to be a nuclear reactor constructed with the assistance of North Korea. The International Atomic Energy Agency undertook an investigation that concluded that the Kibar installation was a nuclear facility.

Israel has kept a close eye on developments in the **Syrian Uprising**, primarily to ensure that Hizballah does not receive advanced missiles and chemical weapons from the Asad regime and to prevent Syrian fighting from spilling over the cease-fire line in the Golan Heights. By mid-2013, Israel had launched several strikes inside Syrian territory and exchanged fire with Syrian forces across the Golan cease-fire line. *See also* FOREIGN POLICY.

ISTIQLAL PARTY. An **Arab nationalist** party whose name means independence. Established by members of **al-Fatat** and al-Ahd during **Amir Faysal** 's short-lived regime of 1918–1920, the party was intended to serve as a public organization, while al-Fatat remained a secret group. Istiqlal called for the independence and unity of the Arab lands under a constitutional monarchy that would reign over a federation of autonomous regions. Its members included men who rose to preeminence during the **French Mandate** era, including **Jamil Mardam** and **Shukri al-Quwwatli**. In the early years of the mandate era, the Istiqlal Party was a rival of **Abd al-Rahman Shahbandar's People's Party**.

J

JABAL ANSARIYYA. Also known as Jabal al-Nusayriya and Jabal al-Alawi, this range in northwestern Syria has an average height of 1,200 meters, with a highest peak (Nabi Yunus) of 1,600 meters. The western slopes facing the Mediterranean Sea receive enough rainfall to support **agriculture** and have a slight enough incline to allow for intensive cultivation and dense settlement. The steeper and drier eastern slopes are more sparsely inhabited. Much of the population of the Ansariyya range has long been primarily **Alawi**, but there are a fair number of **Christian** and a few **Isma`ili** villages as well. Until recent decades, the Alawi peasants of the mountain were dominated by wealthy **Sunni** townsmen of **Hama** and **Latakia**.

Throughout history, the rugged terrain of Jabal Ansariyya has made it difficult for outsiders to rule it directly. The **Ottoman Empire** began to assert central authority more effectively in the last decades of the 19th century. When Ottoman rule ended in 1918, autonomist tendencies appeared in **Shaykh Salih al-Ali's** revolt, and **French Mandate** policies reinforced them by creating an administration separate from the rest of Syria. From 1936 to 1939, Jabal Ansariyya was ruled by a national government in **Damascus**, and then **France** granted it separate status from 1939 to 1942. When Syria became independent in 1946, **Sulayman al-Murshid** led an autonomist movement that the government quickly suppressed. Since that time, the region has been an integral part of Syria.

JABAL DRUZE. A rugged volcanic plateau east of the **Hawran** in southern Syria. The main town and provincial center is **Suwayda**. Its eastern portion consists of a maze of lava flows, hills, and caves that have made it an ideal refuge for political dissenters, as indicated by its Arabic name, **al-Laja'**, which means refuge. In the 17th century, **Druzes** came from **Lebanon** to settle. For most of the three centuries of Druze settlement there, they guarded their autonomy against outside domination. In a process similar to the case of **Jabal Ansariyya**, the **Ottoman Empire** increased its authority in the late 19th century. The **French Mandate** accorded Jabal Druze separate status, but meddling by the **French** authorities turned the region into the center of

the **Great Revolt** of 1925–1927. More recently, Jabal Druze was the site of Syria's first **petroleum** discovery. The district's present population is 90 percent Druze and 10 percent **Christian**, mostly **Greek Orthodox**.

JABIRI, SA'DALLAH AL- (1893–1947). From one of **Aleppo's** leading **families**, Jabiri was active in **Arab nationalist** politics in the late **Ottoman** era, a participant in **Ibrahim Hananu's** revolt, and a prominent nationalist leader during the **French Mandate**. In 1922, he organized the Red Hand, a short-lived nationalist movement modeled on the **Iron Hand Society** and based in **Damascus**. The **French** arrested and exiled Jabiri for his role in the **Great Revolt** of 1925–1927, but they granted him amnesty in 1928. When the **National Bloc** formed its executive leadership in 1932, Jabiri became its vice president and a leader of one of Aleppo's factions in the Bloc. He served in the 1936–1938 cabinet of **Jamil Mardam** and became prime minister of independent Syria's first elected government in August 1943.

Jabiri proved incapable of governing the country in a manner that would have strengthened its fledgling parliamentary system. Graft and nepotism were rampant; the government harassed its critics with arrests, suspensions of **newspapers**, and bans on their organizations. Jabiri resigned in October 1944, but he became prime minister again the following October. During his second tenure, in May 1946, he obtained extraconstitutional powers to issue decrees, including one to eliminate independent oversight of the accounts of government departments, and his parliamentary bloc rammed through measures without regard for legal procedure. Moreover, the government used the gendarmerie to keep officials and parliamentary deputies under surveillance. Feuding among cabinet members and his own declining **health** finally prompted President **Shukri al-Quwwatli** and Interior Minister **Sabri al-Asali** to induce Jabiri to resign in December 1946, six months before his death.

JABIYA, AL-. An ancient settlement in the **Golan Heights** and an important military outpost in **Byzantine** and early **Islamic** times. Al-Jabiya served as a center for the Ghassanids, pre-Islamic Arab vassals of Byzantium. The Muslim Arabs used it as a military headquarters for campaigns against the Byzantines, including the decisive **Battle of Yarmuk**. After that Arab victory, the caliph Umar convened a meeting of Muslim leaders to organize Syria's affairs. Once the Muslims consolidated power in **Palestine** and southern Syria, the center of military activity against the Byzantines shifted north, and al-Jabiya fell into neglect and became uninhabited.

JACOBITE. *See* SYRIAN ORTHODOX.

JADID, SALAH AL- (1926–1993). Dominant figure in the **Neo-Ba`thist** regime of 1966 to 1970. An **Alawi** from Jabla, a small town south of **Latakia**, Jadid's first political involvement was with the **Syrian Social National Party** and then the **Ba`th Party**. He was a founding member of the **Military Committee** that formed in **Egypt** in 1959. In the first Ba`thist regime of 1963 to 1966, Jadid became chief of the Officers' Bureau and the Personnel Branch, positions that gave him the authority to dismiss, transfer, and appoint officers. He used these positions to entrench members of the Military Committee in key commands, including **Hafiz al-Asad** as commander of the Syrian Air Force and Muhammad Umran as commander of a key armored brigade stationed near **Damascus**. Jadid also engineered a purge of **Sunni** officers, whom he replaced with **Alawi**, **Druze**, and **Isma`ili** men. In December 1964, Jadid was promoted to chief of staff and became the leading figure in the Military Committee's struggle against the party old guard in 1965 to 1966. It was Jadid who plotted the **February 23, 1966 Coup** that brought the Neo-Ba`th to power.

In the Neo-Ba`thist regime, Jadid was the most powerful figure, but he satisfied himself with a modest official position as assistant secretary-general of the Ba`th Party's Regional Command. He supported the regime's radical economic measures and its sponsoring of **Palestinian** raids against **Israel**. After Syria's defeat in the **June 1967 War**, Jadid and Asad became rivals for power as Asad took effective control of the **armed forces**, while Jadid remained the master of the party. When a climactic clash occurred in November 1970, Asad easily prevailed, arresting Jadid and throwing him into prison, where he remained until his death in August 1993.

JAMAL PASHA, AHMAD (1872–1922). A member of the **Committee of Union and Progress** ruling triumvirate that dominated **Ottoman** politics from 1912 until 1918. Jamal arrived in Syria in 1914, as governor and commander of the Ottoman Fourth Army to defend Syria against British forces stationed in **Egypt** that threatened to invade during **World War I**. Jamal ordered a massive conscription of Syrian manpower for military service and to build military roads and **railways**. In February 1915, he launched a surprise attack on British forces defending the Suez Canal, but the campaign stalled. He tried again a year later, but British defenses again held their lines.

One of Jamal's main concerns was to stamp out any sign of disloyalty among Syrians active in the nascent **Arab nationalist** movement. Most prominent Syrians were disposed to support the empire during the war, while others were easily co-opted; those who were suspected of disloyalty were exiled to Asia Minor. In April and May 1916, Jamal ordered the execution of 21 Arab nationalists in Beirut and **Damascus**. As a result, he is known in Arab nationalist historiography as a ruthless tyrant. He remained responsible for Syria's defense until the middle of 1917, when a German general took

command; in early 1918, Istanbul recalled Jamal from Syria. At the end of the war, he fled to Germany and then traveled to Afghanistan, where he assisted the government's drive to modernize its army. In the meantime, the Ottoman government court-martialed and passed a death sentence on him in absentia. In July 1922, he was assassinated in Tbilisi by two **Armenian** gunmen seeking vengeance for Ottoman atrocities against their countrymen during the recent war.

JANISSARIES. Ottoman infantry corps that was at the forefront in the empire's conquests in Europe and Asia. In Syrian history, their significance lay in the garrisons established in the major cities of **Aleppo** and **Damascus**, where they constituted virtually autonomous power blocs that took over sections of the local economies and could challenge the authority of Ottoman governors. In 17th-century Damascus, a distinction arose between "local" janissaries (*yarliyya*), who were artisans, other townsmen, and troops who struck roots in the local **economy**, and imperial janissaries (*kapi kullari*), troops dispatched to counter the rebelliousness of the local janissaries. Twice during the 18th century, in 1726 and 1740, the two factions fought for supremacy in Damascus. In 1741, the imperial janissaries were expelled, leaving the local janissaries in a dominant position until their defeat at the hands of the Ottoman governor As'ad Pasha al-Azm, who then reestablished a corps of imperial janissaries under his firm control, but the two factions resumed their feuds following As'ad Pasha's dismissal in 1757.

In the 18th and early 19th centuries, the janissaries of Aleppo contended for dominance with the **ashraf**, religious leaders claiming descent from the Prophet Muhammad. In the early 1800s, the janissaries completely dominated the city against the will of governors appointed by Istanbul. This situation abruptly ended in 1813, when the Ottoman governor carried out a massacre of leading janissaries that effectively reduced the group's collective power. The janissaries remained elements in local urban politics until Sultan Mahmud II eliminated the corps by means of a well-planned massacre in March 1826, in Istanbul.

JAZA'IRI, TAHIR AL- (1852–1920). A prominent figure in the early stages of the **Salafiyya** movement. Jaza'iri's most lasting achievement was the foundation of the Zahiriyya Library, Syria's first public library. From 1898 to 1907, he served as curator of libraries in the province of **Damascus** and set up libraries in **Homs**, **Hama**, Jerusalem, and Tripoli. Jaza'iri was also a pioneer in the development of modern **education**, and he enjoyed **Midhat Pasha's** backing in his efforts to lay the groundwork of a system of state schools in the province. As superintendent of schools in the early 1880s, he developed curricula and composed textbooks. Furthermore, Jaza'iri took a

keen interest in the works of the 13th-century religious reformer **Taqi al-Din Ahmad ibn Taymiyya**, and he participated in the Salafi revival of his works by seeking and circulating his manuscripts.

Jaza'iri was at the center of reformist trends in Damascus, and his private salons attracted Turkish officials, Arab **ulama**, and younger Arab students. This group, known as the Senior Circle, favored the restoration of the 1876 **Ottoman constitution**, as well as educational reform. Ottoman authorities learned of his political leanings and began to harass him in the early 1900s. Jaza'iri got fed up with searches of his personal library and confiscation of his papers, so, in 1907, he left Syria to settle in **Egypt**. Even though he had enjoyed good relations with **Turkish** partisans of constitutional government, he distrusted the **Committee of Union and Progress** and remained in Egypt after it came to power. During **World War I**, Jaza'iri supported the **Arab Revolt**. He did not return to Syria until 1919, when he was seriously ill, and he died shortly thereafter.

JAZIRA. In Arabic, *jazira* means an island or peninsula and, by extension, refers to land between two rivers, in this case the **Euphrates River** and Tigris River. The Jazira region in Syria consists mostly of a low plateau broken by several mountain ranges that give rise to tributaries of the Euphrates, including the **Khabur River** and Balikh River. Throughout history, Jazira has been of strategic importance as a channel for communications between **Iraq** and Syria. The Arabs conquered it from the **Byzantines** in a series of campaigns between 639 and 641. In the early **Islamic** period, it was a haven for religious dissidents and the site of frequent strife between Arab tribes competing for scarce grazing lands. The most famous sons of Jazira are the founders of the 10th-century **Hamdanid dynasty** that established splendid courts in **Aleppo** and **Mosul**.

Until modern times, Jazira was a sparsely settled region, mostly inhabited by **Bedouin**, but after **World War I**, **France** encouraged the settlement of **refugees** from **Turkey**, mostly **Armenians** and other **Christians**. During the **French Mandate**, other refugees from Turkey and Iraq included **Kurds** and **Assyrians**. These 20th-century migrations made Jazira the country's most heterogeneous province. New towns sprang up, most notably **al-Hasaka**, which has a Christian majority, and **al-Qamishli**, at the same time that Bedouin were induced to settle down. Al-Qamishli, in particular, located near the Turkish border along a **railway** running to Aleppo, became the center of a regional economic boom based on the export of **agricultural** and pastoral products. Among Kurds, Armenians, and Assyrians, sentiment for autonomy was quite strong, but France did not create a separate regime as it had for **Jabal Druze** and the **Alawi** districts. When the 1936 **National Bloc** government assumed responsibility for administering Jazira, however, a strong movement for autonomy developed. The government appointed a **Sunni**

from **Damascus** to govern the restive province. He failed to reconcile autonomist elements to the new order, and soon a revolt of Kurds and Christians erupted, forcing the governor to flee al-Qamishli. Continued troubles led the French to establish a separate regime for Jazira in July 1939, but Syrian control was restored the following year.

During the 1940s and 1950s, the population and agricultural production grew rapidly. Aleppan merchants invested in machinery to cultivate this vast region and induced peasants from western Syria to migrate to Jazira to work the land. Within a decade, the amount of land under cultivation doubled. The province witnessed further economic development and population growth, but agricultural expansion slowed due to difficulties with irrigation, drainage, and sedimentation in projects along the Euphrates and Khabur rivers. The region's major cities are al-Qamishli (200,000), **Dayr al-Zur** (200,000), **al-Raqqa** (250,000), and al-Hasaka (190,000).

JEWS. Syria's Jewish community has its origins in antiquity with their migration to the area in the 13th century BC. After the 7th-century Arab conquest, they continued to live in **Aleppo** and **Damascus**. Like the **Christians** under Muslim rule, the Jews did not experience pressure to convert or persecution; rather, they were permitted to practice their **religion** and govern their communal relations with minimal interference by the Muslim authorities.

One of the hallmarks of Jewish history in Syria is immigration and settlement in several phases. As a result, close study of Syrian Jews reveals a variety of communities rather than a monolithic group. At different times there were special institutions for **Iraqi** Jews, who arrived from Baghdad in the 9th and 10th centuries; Spanish Jews, who came in the 16th century; and southern European Jews, who came in the 18th century. A second feature is the fluctuation in their fortunes. Communities flourished during the centuries of **Fatimid** and **Ayyubid** rule, when Jews held influential positions as administrators and physicians and religious scholarship flourished. Their position deteriorated under **Mamluk** rule.

In the 16th century, the expulsion of Jews from Spain and efforts by the **Ottoman Empire** to attract Jewish traders and craftsmen led to a substantial immigration of Jews to Aleppo, where they formed separate institutions with their own synagogues and cemeteries. The Ottoman era marked a high point in the fortunes of Syrian Jews, many of whom prospered in long-distance **trade**, finance, and official service. During the 18th century, Aleppo's flourishing commerce with **Iran** and **India** enticed Jews from Italy and **France** to settle there, where they formed a distinct group known as Francos, who occasionally clashed with native Jews over tax exemption and communal autonomy. In Damascus, the intellectual vitality of Jewish life was evident in a Hebrew press that produced a printed text in 1605. During the middle 18th

and early 19th centuries, the Farhi **family** in Damascus attained wealth and influence as treasurers for Ottoman governors and through private financial transactions.

Neither the end of the Ottoman Empire nor the imposition of the **French Mandate** affected the Jews' status, but the Zionist movement and the threat it posed to the Arabs of **Palestine** fundamentally altered the conditions of life for Syrian Jews. Anti-Jewish sentiment emerged in the mid-1930s because of Syrian opposition to Zionism and the suspicion that Syrian Jews sympathized with the movement to turn Palestine into a Jewish state. A few attacks on Jews in Damascus occurred in 1936 and 1945. After the **United Nations** passed a resolution calling for the partition of Palestine into Jewish and Arab states in November 1947, anti-Jewish violence erupted in Aleppo, where a number of synagogues were set on fire and destroyed. During the **Palestine War of 1948**, there were further attacks on Jewish property in Damascus.

As recently as 1943, there were nearly 30,000 Jews in Syria, but that number dropped sharply to about 6,000 because of emigration in the years surrounding the 1948 creation of **Israel**. Ongoing hostility between Syria and Israel meant that the remaining Syrian Jews were viewed with suspicion by the government and people. By 1990, the Jewish population was divided among 4,500 in Damascus, 1,000 in Aleppo, and approximately 100 in the northeastern city of **al-Qamishli**. In 1994, the Syrian government made a gesture of goodwill toward Israel when it announced a free emigration policy for Syrian Jews. About 3,000 Jews left, leaving just several hundred in the country and probably spelling the sad end of their distinguished historical tradition there. While precise numbers are difficult to obtain, there remained about 100 Jews living in Syria in the early years of the 21st century.

JORDAN. Known as **Transjordan** before 1949. Amir Abdallah, the son of Sharif **Husayn ibn Ali**, ruled Transjordan from the time of its establishment in 1921. He always harbored the ambition of adding Syria to his kingdom. Abdallah ultimately added portions of eastern **Palestine** to his kingdom during the course of the **Palestine War of 1948**. From the time of Syrian independence in 1946 until Abdallah's assassination in July 1951, he pursued his ambition to rule Syria by meddling in its internal affairs. After his death, however, Syria became more aggressive toward Jordan and its new ruler, King Husayn. In the Arab cold war of the 1950s and 1960s, Syria and Jordan consistently found themselves on opposing sides because of Syria's republican nature and opposition to Western influence on one hand, and Jordan's monarchical government and support for Western interests on the other. Relations deteriorated when the **Neo-Ba'th** regime came to power in 1966. It accused Jordan of supporting an abortive plot that year and struck back with a car bomb at a border crossing the next. That led to a brief cut in relations. Further occasions for disagreement included Syrian support for an indepen-

dent **Palestinian** guerrilla organization, Fatah, and support for the 1970 rising of Palestinian guerrillas against the Jordanian monarchy. Once again, relations were cut in July 1971.

Hafiz al-Asad's policy of moderation in **foreign policy** led to the improvement of ties with Jordan on the eve of the **October 1973 War**, but, in the late 1970s, relations again worsened when the Syrians accused Jordan of harboring members of the **Muslim Brotherhood** seeking to overthrow the Asad regime. Jordan then developed strong ties to **Iraq** as a counter against Syria and staunchly supported Iraq in its war against **Iran** throughout the 1980s. Furthermore, for most of the 1980s, Syria suspected King Husayn of willingness to enter a peace process sponsored by the **United States** that would exclude Syria. After the 1990–1991 crisis and war over Kuwait, Syria and Jordan found themselves in similar circumstances, as both countries agreed to participate in peace talks with **Israel**, and for a time there were signs that the need to coordinate policies would dictate better relations, but Jordan's signing of a peace treaty with Israel in October 1994 again demonstrated the divergence in the two countries' interests and policies.

For the next five years, relations remained cool between Amman and **Damascus** because of Jordan's peace treaty with Israel. When King Husayn died in February 1999, President Asad attended his funeral, along with his veteran foreign policy advisers, **Abd al-Halim al-Khaddam** and **Faruq al-Shara'**. Asad met with King Husayn's son and successor, King Abdallah II. Later that month, Asad's son, **Bashar al-Asad**, met with the new ruler. Shortly afterward, a two-day visit to Damascus by King Abdallah II resulted in improved relations on **trade** and cooperation on sharing **water** resources in the **Yarmuk River** watershed. During that year and the next, Syria provided water to alleviate Jordan's severe drought. In June 2000, King Abdallah visited Damascus for Hafiz al-Asad's funeral.

Bilateral relations improved in the early years of Bashar al-Asad's rule, especially in the area of economic cooperation. In 2001, Syria joined an electricity network shared by **Egypt** and Jordan. Nevertheless, chronic tensions remained due to incompatible geopolitical objectives. For example, Jordan responded to the U.S. invasion of Iraq by allowing American military forces to use its territory for operations, while Syria opposed the invasion. Jordan was also part of a group of other Arab states, including **Saudi Arabia** and Egypt, that opposed the expansion of Iranian influence, while Syria facilitated the expansion of such influence, in many cases acting as a client state for Iran. Relations did not improve following the outbreak of the **Syrian Uprising**. Jordan expressed support for the Syrian opposition and granted asylum to Syrian Air Force pilots defecting from the Asad regime. As the violence intensified in Syria, the flow of **refugees** across the border into

Jordan increased, especially in the first half of 2013, putting strains on the country's capacity to supply several hundred thousand Syrians for an indefinite period of time.

JULY 1860 DAMASCUS MASSACRE. One of the major events in 19th-century Syrian history. On 9 July 1860, Muslims began several days of attacks against **Christian** townsmen of the Bab Tuma quarter, looting and burning churches, homes, and shops, and massacring Christians. Anti-Christian sentiment was stoked during the **Egyptian** occupation (1831–1840) by **Ibrahim Pasha's** favorable treatment of Christians. The 1860 outbreak came in the context of rising anti-Christian sentiment in the **Ottoman Empire** due to the **Tanzimat** reforms, particularly the 1856 edict declaring equality between Muslims and non-Muslims, and the improving commercial prospects of Christians more generally. More immediately, the violence came on the heels of fighting between **Druzes** and Maronites in **Lebanon**.

Communal tensions rose in the first week of July, as townsmen digested reports of Druze military victories over Christians. **Damascene** Muslims taunted and threatened the town's Christians. At that point, the Algerian hero Abd al-Qadir al-Jaza'iri, a resident in Damascus since 1855, urged the city's Muslim leaders to prevent a violent outbreak that could lead to European intervention in Syria, but his warnings failed to prevent the riots. The incident that ignited the violence involved a number of Muslim youths who drew crosses on streets so that Christians would have to step on them. The Ottoman governor punished the boys by making them remove the markings. Muslims in the marketplace then forced the guards to let the youths go, and a furious Muslim crowd formed that initiated eight days of attacks in Bab Tuma. By no means did all Damascene Muslims condone the violence. Indeed, prominent notables offered refuge, and Jaza'iri took a contingent of armed men into the Christian quarter to rescue terrified Christians. Some 5,000 of the city's 20,000 Christians were killed; of the 15,000 survivors, Jaza'iri and his men saved 10,000, and the rest resided in other parts of the city where their Muslim neighbors provided protection.

News of the atrocities caused outrage in Europe and triggered military intervention by several powers, chiefly **France**. To demonstrate Ottoman resolve and to fend off European demands for closer supervision of Ottoman governance, the authorities declared martial law and inflicted harsh punishment on the town's Muslims for committing the outrages, and on their own officials for failing to prevent or halt the violence. The Ottoman governor was executed; a collective fine was imposed on the city's Muslims; approximately 250 Muslims were executed for their crimes; and nearly 150 Muslims were exiled, including some of the city's leading dignitaries. To drive home the point that Ottoman authority was not to be challenged, Damascenes were disarmed and conscripted into the army, something that had been tried three

times before in the 1840s and 1850s but had encountered violent resistance. By October 1860, 3,000 men had been drafted and sent to Anatolia, and conscription became an annual event thereafter. An indemnity was levied on the entire province equal to two years' annual revenues, and it was used to reimburse Christians for destroyed property and for the reconstruction of Bab Tuma, which was completed by 1864. In spite of these punitive and restorative measures and indications of Ottoman concern for Christians' welfare, hundreds left Damascus for safer confines in Lebanon. In the broader historical scheme, the events of 1860 marked a turning point in relations between Istanbul and Syria: Thereafter, the Ottomans subjected the province to much closer and more effective control.

JUNE 1967 WAR. Also known as the Six-Day War, this conflict fundamentally altered the contours of the Arab–**Israeli** conflict. In a sense, Syria's **Neo-Ba`thist** regime planted the seeds of war with its provocations of Israel in the **demilitarized zones**. As military clashes escalated, it appeared possible that Israel might strike at **Damascus** to punish the Syrians. On 13 May 1967, reports reached **Egypt** that Israel was preparing to invade Syria. Egyptian president Gamal Abd al-Nasser responded by ordering the withdrawal of **United Nations** forces stationed in Gaza and in Sinai at the entrance of the Gulf of Aqaba. Nasser then sent troops into Sinai and announced the closure of the Gulf of Aqaba to Israeli shipping. Diplomatic efforts to defuse the crisis were still being pursued when Israel's leaders decided to launch surprise attacks on Syria, Egypt, and **Jordan**.

On the war's first day, 5 June, Israeli warplanes destroyed the air forces of all three Arab countries. In the first four days of fighting, Israel conquered the Sinai Peninsula and Gaza Strip from Egypt and the West Bank from Jordan, while Syria launched token artillery attacks from the **Golan Heights**. By the evening of 8 June, Egypt had accepted a cease-fire, and Syria followed the next morning, but Israeli minister of defense Moshe Dayan, without consulting the Israeli cabinet, ordered a full attack on the Syrian front. When a cease-fire took effect the following evening, Israeli forces had occupied the Golan Heights. The war was a devastating blow to what little legitimacy the Neo-Ba`th regime could claim and damaged the reputation of Defense Minister **Hafiz al-Asad**. An enduring legacy of the war is the Israeli occupation of the Golan Heights. Syria claims that **United Nations Resolution 242**, passed in November 1967, requires Israel to completely withdraw from land it conquered in June, but thus far, Israeli governments have not agreed to Syria's terms. The absence of any progress toward a diplomatic remedy for Syria's territorial loss led to the **October 1973 War**.

K

KAFTARU, AHMAD (1915–2004). The **Sunni** chief jurisprudent, or mufti, of Syria from 1964 to 2004. Kaftaru received a traditional **Islamic** religious **education** and became a teacher of **religion** in **Qunaytra** in 1948. He then became mufti of **Damascus** in 1951 and was active in several religious associations. Kaftaru was particularly interested in interfaith dialogue and traveled widely to participate in conferences devoted to dialogue among adherents of different religions. His ecumenical disposition made him a good fit for the **Ba`th Party** regime's efforts to put religious minorities on equal footing with Sunni Muslims.

KAN'AN, GHAZI AL- (1942–2005). From 1982 until 2002, Lieutenant General Kan'an presided over Syrian Military Intelligence in **Lebanon**. He assumed that politically and strategically sensitive position after **Israel's** 1982 invasion of Lebanon and, for two decades, acted as de facto viceroy for Syrian interests. Lebanese political leaders frequently visited the headquarters he established at the border town of Anjar. He left the post when **Bashar al-Asad** appointed him to head the domestic political security agency in **Damascus**. In 2004, Kan'an was named minister of information. The general committed suicide on 12 October 2005, with a gunshot to the head. His death coincided with the release of a **United Nations** investigation report into the assassination of former Lebanese prime minister **Rafiq al-Hariri**, leading some observers to suspect Kan'an had a role in the crime.

KASM, ABD AL-RA'UF AL- (1932–). Prime minister under **Hafiz al-Asad** from January 1980 until October 1987. Kasm was the son of a well-known religious scholar of **Damascus**. He had become acquainted with Asad in the early 1950s when both were active as student members of the **Ba`th Party**. Kasm went on to become a professor of urban planning at Damascus University. In the midst of the largely **Islamic fundamentalist** insurrection, Asad appointed him prime minister in an attempt to sway the **Sunni** Muslims of Damascus. Kasm took several steps to placate Sunni public opinion, but they had practically no effect in quelling the unrest. As prime minister, he

presided over a vast civilian bureaucracy that was frequently bent to the needs of the more powerful military branch of government. On several occasions, he tried to curtail different generals' smuggling and siphoning resources from the **public sector**, but these efforts were ultimately futile. Kasm's dismissal came at a time of economic hardship, but at the time, his tenure had been the longest of any prime minister since independence.

KAWAKIBI, ABD AL-RAHMAN AL- (1849–1903). Influential writer and advocate of **Islamic** reform. Kawakibi was born to an influential **family** of **Aleppo**. He was active in the earliest stages of Arabic journalism, working first for the official **Ottoman** paper and later issuing a short-lived private **newspaper**. In his journalistic writings, Kawakibi criticized Ottoman governors and other officials. As a result, his publications were banned, and he was embroiled in disputes with the Ottoman governor of Aleppo. His troubles led him to immigrate to **Egypt** in 1898.

Kawakibi is best known for two essays that criticize the Ottoman political order at the time of Sultan **Abdulhamid II**. The title of the first work refers to the Arabic nickname for Mecca, Mother of Cities, and calls for the restoration of the **caliphate** to the Arab clan of Quraysh. According to Kawakibi, this renewed caliphate would spark an Islamic spiritual revival but not provide a focus for Muslim political unity. His second work details the evils of unrestrained despotism and was intended as a sharp criticism of Ottoman misrule.

KHABUR RIVER. A major tributary of the **Euphrates River** that rises in **Turkey** and flows for 486 kilometers in Syria's **Jazira** region before joining the Euphrates south of **Dayr al-Zur**. Government projects to construct barges and drain off salt have enabled the development of **agriculture** along the Khabur. In the 1990s, however, upstream projects in Turkey that depleted artesian wells that feed the river reduced its volume by half. In the early years of the 21st century, the Khabur became a dry river bed due to **drought** and water projects in Turkey. **Al-Hasaka** (population 190,000) is the major town along this river.

KHADDAM, ABD AL-HALIM AL- (1932–). This **Sunni** Muslim from the coastal town of **Baniyas** became one of President **Hafiz al-Asad's** closest advisers and a central figure in formulating the country's **foreign policy** for three decades. Khaddam joined the **Ba`th Party** while still in high school. He became acquainted with Asad when the two were party activists in **Latakia** in the early 1950s. Khaddam went on to study law at **Damascus** University. After completing his studies, he had a practice in Damascus until the **March 8, 1963 Coup** brought the Ba`th to power.

In the first Ba`thist regime, Khaddam was governor of **Hama** when anti-government protests erupted in April 1964. Three years later, he had the misfortune of being governor of **Qunaytra** when it was lost to **Israel** in the **June 1967 War**. In the **Neo-Ba`th** regime, Khaddam entered the cabinet as minister of economy and foreign **trade**. When Asad seized power in 1970, he made Khaddam his foreign minister, a post he held until 1984, when he was promoted to first vice president. In the late 1970s and 1980s, he helped shape Syria's close relations with the Soviet Union. After Syria's decisive intervention in the **Lebanese Civil War** in 1976, Khaddam represented Syrian interests there, along with the head of Syrian Military Intelligence in **Lebanon**, **Ghazi al-Kan'an**. In 1999, however, President Asad reportedly put his son, **Bashar al-Asad**, in charge of the "Lebanon portfolio" as part of Bashar's preparation to succeed him as president.

When Hafiz al-Asad died in June 2000, Vice President Khaddam served as head of the transitional government prior to Bashar al-Asad's official succession. After a brief flirtation with a political opening, the younger Asad cracked down on dissent, and Khaddam acted as one of the leading spokesmen for the regime's reactionary faction. He accused political reformers of complicity in foreign plots and sabotaging the nation's struggle against Israel. In the realm of foreign affairs, Khaddam remained deeply involved in Lebanon and regional relations.

In June 2005, Bashar had Khaddam removed from the vice presidency, reportedly due to disagreement over Lebanese policy, and he went into exile. In an interview with a Saudi-owned **newspaper**, he claimed that Bashar had personally threatened Lebanese prime minister **Rafiq al-Hariri** shortly before his assassination. One day after the incriminating interview, the regime charged him with treason and **corruption**, ensuring that he would not return to Syria. While in exile, Khaddam tried several times to form an opposition party, including a brief alliance with the secretary-general of the Syrian **Muslim Brotherhood**, **Ali al-Bayanuni**, in the National Salvation Front, which lasted from 2006 to 2009. In October 2008, a Syrian military court sentenced the former regime insider to life in prison; however, officials failed to extradite Khaddam from his home of exile in **France**.

KHARIJI. A small Muslim sect that had its greatest importance in early **Islamic** history in the disputes regarding the **caliphate**. They emerged during the contest between **Ali ibn Abi Talib** and **Mu`awiya** when the former agreed to an arbitration to settle their dispute. Some of Ali's followers opposed his compromise, and they seceded (*kharaja*) from his camp, becoming his deadly enemies for what they considered to be his betrayal of fundamental religious principles. In 661, a Khariji assassinated Ali, but an attempt on Mu`awiya's life failed. In later years, Khariji revolts would plague the **Umayyad dynasty** and its successor, the **Abbasid dynasty**. The movement

was strong in parts of **Iraq**, **Iran**, Arabia, and North Africa, while in Syria it established a strong presence among Arab tribes in **Jazira** until the 10th century.

KHURI, FARIS AL- (1877–1962). This prominent nationalist in the **French Mandate** era was unusually influential for a **Christian**. In the early mandate period, Khuri was a political ally of **Abd al-Rahman Shahbandar** and served as vice president of the **People's Party**. For his role in supporting the **Great Revolt** of 1925–1927, the **French** briefly exiled him. In 1932, Khuri helped form the **National Bloc**, in whose leadership he would figure throughout the mandate era. He was part of the delegation that went to Paris in 1936 to negotiate the **Franco-Syrian Treaty**, and he served as speaker of parliament from 1936 to 1939, and again in 1943. He headed three short-lived ministries in 1944–1945, before returning to his position as speaker of parliament.

During the independence period, Khuri became prime minister in October 1954, following the first free national elections since 1947 and five years of military domination. His cabinet drew heavily from the conservative **National Party** and **People's Party**, both known for pro-Western stances in **foreign policy**. The increasingly popular neutralist impulse, however, was well represented in parliament, and Khuri had to declare his intention to keep Syria out of any pro-Western alliances. In January 1955, he attended an Arab ministers' conference in Cairo meant to coordinate opposition to **Iraq's** participation in a security pact with **Turkey**. Khuri's refusal to condemn Iraq led to the fall of his cabinet on 7 February 1955.

KING-CRANE COMMISSION. At the Paris Peace Conference of 1918–1919, U.S. president Woodrow Wilson proposed that the allies send a commission to the Arab lands to determine the wishes of the people regarding their political future. **France** and **Great Britain** refused to participate, but Wilson still sent an American team headed by Dr. Henry Churchill King and Mr. Charles R. Crane to conduct the inquiry. The commission visited **Damascus** from 25 June to 19 July 1919. During their visit, they met with the **Syrian Congress**, religious leaders, and various delegations. They reported overwhelming sentiment for the unity and independence of Syria, including **Palestine**, under a constitutional monarchy, with **Amir Faysal** as king. Members of the commission learned that a limited mandate would be acceptable and that the **United States** was the preferred mandatory power. While a mandate held by Britain was also deemed acceptable, there was nearly complete opposition to France's aspirations in Syria. In October 1919, President Wilson suffered a stroke, and the United States withdrew from the diplomatic process. The commission's support for Syrian self-determination

collided with French and British ambitions to carve out spheres of influence, and its findings were completely ignored as the European powers established their rule over Arab lands against the will of the people.

KURD ALI, MUHAMMAD (1876–1953). Pioneer of journalism and author of popular works on Arab and Syrian history. Kurd Ali studied under the religious and **educational** reformer **Tahir al-Jaza'iri** and frequented circles calling for administrative and social reform in the **Ottoman Empire**. He gained early notoriety for publishing *al-Muqtabas*, one of the most influential **newspapers** in the years before **World War I**. In it, he voiced support for the movement for Arab rights, but during World War I, **Jamal Pasha** co-opted him to back the Ottoman cause. After the war, Kurd Ali became prominent as a founder of the Arab Academy in 1919, and, in 1922, he became its president. In the **French Mandate** era, he was education minister in 1928. He established his place in Syrian intellectual life by publishing works on the history of **Damascus**.

KURDS. Most Kurds live in **Iran**, **Iraq**, and **Turkey**, but the predominantly Kurdish region of the Middle East, known as Kurdistan, also spills over into northern Syria. They are the country's largest non-Arab **minority**, as they comprise approximately 10 percent of the population, roughly 2 million people. Syrian Kurds speak the Bahdinani, or North Kurmanji, dialect of the Kurdish **language** that is spoken by the Kurds of Turkey and northern Iraq. Most Kurds live in the northern parts of the country near the Taurus Mountains, in **Jazira** province, and in the vicinity of **Aleppo**. They are mostly **Sunni** Muslim; a small number are Alevi, **Yazidi**, and **Christian**.

Kurds first became prominent in Syrian history during the 12th century, when the **Atabegs** included Kurdish soldiers in their armies. One Kurdish clan, the **Ayyubid**, whose most famous member was **Saladin**, established its rule over Syria and **Egypt** for 90 years. In recent history, most Kurds have been pastoral nomads living in sparsely populated regions of the north. The Kurdish population grew considerably between 1923 and 1938, when the Turkish government suppressed revolts against its strict nationalist and secular policies, and thousands of Kurds fled south. In Iran, Iraq, and Turkey, Kurdish autonomy movements have struggled against nationalist governments in the last 50 years. In Syria, on the other hand, there has been just one brief attempt to form a Kurdish political movement. In 1957, a Syrian branch of the Kurdish Democratic Party of Iraq was formed with the purpose of promoting cultural autonomy, but two years later, it was banned under the **United Arab Republic (UAR)**.

Throughout the 1960s, the UAR and the two **Ba`th Party** regimes strictly forbade any signs of Kurdish separateness. One enduring vestige of that period's discriminatory policy is the problem of stateless Kurds. In October 1962, the authorities conducted an exceptional census of **al-Hasaka** governorate as part of an effort to dilute the region's large Kurdish majority. The census reportedly stripped Syrian nationality from approximately 120,000 Kurds on the grounds that they could not prove residence as of 1945. They and their descendants fall into two categories. Some are classified as foreigners but possess a special identity card. Others are unregistered residents and have no official documents. Kurds in both categories are barred from owning property or businesses, obtaining government or **public-sector** jobs, acquiring passports, and marrying Syrian citizens. The government eventually acknowledged errors in the census and noted that individuals could petition to claim citizenship, something that some successfully attained. Because the children of stateless Kurds are not Syrian citizens, their numbers reached about 300,000 in 2013.

The **Arab nationalist** ideology of Syrian governments has discriminated against Kurds in other ways as well. In the early 1970s, the authorities encouraged Arab migrants to settle in villages near the border with Turkey to dilute the concentration of Kurds there. The government does not allow Kurdish-language schools (unlike **Armenians** and **Circassians**), and Kurdish publications are sold but may not be published. In rural areas, they generally celebrate the customary Kurdish holiday Nawruz—or New Year's—without interference from the authorities. It is notable that a large number of Kurds living in the cities, especially **Damascus**, supported the **Syrian Communist Party**, in part because its leader, **Khalid Bakdash**, was Kurdish, and partly because it is one of the few Syrian political parties that do not have an Arab nationalist ideology.

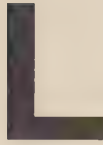
The Kurds play a role in the country's **foreign policy**. **Hafiz al-Asad** supported Kurdish movements in Iraq and Turkey. The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, an Iraqi Kurdish party led by Jalal Talabani, was founded in Damascus in 1976. The Syrian government allowed the Kurdistan Workers' Party, a movement of Kurds in Turkey better known by its Kurdish acronym of PKK, to operate guerrilla bases in **Lebanon** and keep offices in Damascus from the early 1980s until 1998.

On the eve of the U.S. attack on **Iraq** in March 2003, Syria expressed concerns about the prospect of an independent Kurdish nation emerging in its aftermath. In December 2002, Kurds demonstrated outside the People's Assembly in Damascus protesting ethnic discrimination. In response to the unrest, President **Bashar al-Asad** visited Kurdish regions and met with leaders to hear their grievances and tell them that he considered them an integral

part of the Syrian nation. That development seemed to augur a welcome turn away from the record of Syrian governments' Arab ethnocentrism in dealings with the Kurds, but the regime soon returned to its usual heavy-handed ways.

In the first year of the **Syrian Uprising**, the Kurds, for the most part, remained on the sidelines. Some Kurdish political groups joined the opposition and protests, while many refrained from taking a direct part in the marches, in some measure because the Asad regime offered them concessions to dissuade them from joining the opposition. Given that the Kurds make up 10 percent of the Syrian population, widespread Kurdish opposition would severely complicate the Asad regime's strategy for survival. To placate Kurdish sentiment, in April 2011, the Asad regime granted citizenship to some of the stateless Kurds, making it easier to purchase and own property. Another factor that dampened Kurdish participation in the uprising was the feeling among many Kurdish groups that the Syrian opposition did not do enough to reach out to them and reassure them that there would be a place for Kurds in a new regime. At the end of 2011, due to pressure on the government from rebel forces in other parts of Syria, the regime withdrew officials from Kurdish regions and allowed the Democratic Union Party (PYD) to take over local administration in the towns. The PYD, however, had to contend with a collection of Kurdish parties called the Kurdish National Council, which had the support of the head of Iraqi Kurdistan Regional Government, Masoud Barzani. Hence, while the Kurdish region did not join the uprising, Damascus lost direct control.

KUZBARI, MA'MUN AL- (c. 1914–1998). For a brief spell, Kuzbari was the prime minister of the first **secessionist** government that formed after the breakup of the **United Arab Republic**. He was also an attorney and businessman from an old **Damascene** family that had a proud history of outstanding religious scholars (**ulama**) in the 18th and 19th centuries. Kuzbari assembled a cabinet of men from the two veteran conservative political parties, the **People's Party** and the **National Party**. He resigned after less than two months (29 September to 20 November 1961). The brevity of his tenure foreshadowed the rhythm of political life for the next 18 months, when the average tenure was three months, until the **March 8, 1963 Coup** by the **Ba'th Party** put an end to democratic politics.



LABOR FORCE AND UNEMPLOYMENT. Developing countries try to devise economic policies that generate gainful employment for their citizens and equip workers with technical skills needed to increase productivity in all sectors of the **economy**. Beyond these two common challenges, Syria faces the additional task of creating a large number of new jobs for its rapidly growing population. Efforts to develop the national economy and develop the potential of the work force have been complicated by significant changes in the population. Since independence, the population has quintupled, the ratio of urban to rural residence has shifted because of village to city migration, and the economy has changed from a primarily agrarian orientation to one with balance among **agriculture, industry**, and services.

Establishing exact figures about the labor force is difficult because observers doubt the accuracy of official statistical abstracts. Consequently, there are wide variations in estimates on the changing shape of the labor force since independence. Nonetheless, the general tendency has been the decline of agriculture's share of the labor force from more than half to around one-third (estimates range from 30 to 40 percent). Employment in the service sector, including government bodies and the **armed forces**, has increased from approximately 10 percent to as much as 40 percent. Industrial enterprises have raised their share of the labor force from perhaps 10 percent to about 20 percent. The figures on male and female participation in the labor force are considered more reliable. Female participation inched up from 13 percent to approximately 20 percent between 1980 and 2000. The largest field of work for **women** is agriculture, where the majority of the labor force is female.

Figures on unemployment are elusive. Many Syrians in the agriculture sector have only seasonal work. Overstaffing at **public-sector** firms and government bodies has masked a shortage of employment situations. Three-year compulsory military service for all men has reduced the unemployment rate as well. One last factor that alleviates pressure on jobs is migration to the Gulf and **Lebanon**. Since 1970, government statistics have generally shown the unemployment rate to be in the vicinity of 8 percent, but outside observers estimate that the real rate hovers in the range of 20 percent.

While it is difficult to get a precise sense of unemployment statistics and the distribution of the labor force by sector, the primary perennial problem in Syrian manpower is crystal clear: a lack of technical capacity in the workforce. Part of the problem is that **Ba`th Party** regimes nationalized large enterprises and assumed responsibility for major infrastructure projects. Low salaries and mismanagement have caused many Syrians with professional and technical qualifications to seek work in the Gulf countries, where salaries are higher.

Another difficulty has been the failure to introduce adequate technical **education** in schools and universities. National education policy raised literacy rates, but there remains an endemic shortage of skilled labor. Government authorities have grappled with this problem for decades, but it has persisted into the new millennium and seems likely to worsen as the costs of introducing and frequently replacing computer and scientific equipment put this goal out of Syria's reach. Moreover, the government continues to adhere to an independent economic course that preserves economic autonomy but sacrifices access to World Bank assistance, let alone U.S. economic aid. The country's high birthrate has meant that job creation—about 200,000 to 250,000 per year to absorb young adults—poses economic challenges with political ramifications.

These problems are evident in the country's unemployment rate, which stood at about 12 percent in 2011, when the Syrian labor force had 5.6 million active workers. Services occupied the largest number of workers (67 percent), while 17 percent worked in agriculture and 16 percent in various industries. The **Syrian Uprising** has caused terrible disruption to the economy and drove the unemployment rate to 20 percent by the end of 2011, and close to 40 percent by early 2013. This figure continues to rise as the turmoil continues. *See also* LABOR MOVEMENT.

LABOR MOVEMENT. Syria's modern labor movement began in 1926, when Subhi Khatib founded the country's first **trade** union. Printers and textile workers established a number of unions in the following years. The first national conference of trade unions convened in **Damascus** in 1936. Its members demanded restrictions on child labor, higher wages, a shorter work day, and legal guarantees for trade union activities. Two years later, the trade unions founded the General Federation of Trade Unions (GFTU). In 1946, the federation held a second conference, during which it drafted a labor law for submission to parliament, which passed the measure. The Labor Law of 1946 marked a qualified gain for workers. On the one hand, it legalized trade unions and granted them a limited right to strike. On the other, it subordinated them to a government body, the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare. Thus, workers did not have a presumptive right to form trade unions but had to obtain government approval. Moreover, the Ministry of Labor vetted can-

didates for election to union leadership. Furthermore, the law prohibited trade unions from participating in political activity, and peasants were not included among the workers who had the right to form unions. The law did, however, promote **health** insurance and pensions for workers.

In the 1950s, the number of workers in unions grew from 28,000 in 1951 to 46,000 in 1958. Two-thirds of unionized workers were in the two main cities, **Damascus** and **Aleppo**. The federation participated in the 1956 formation of the International Confederation of Arab Trade Unions, whose first president was Khatib.

While the first 12 years of independence had brought a number of gains to workers, the rise of nominally socialist regimes under the **United Arab Republic (UAR)** and the **Ba'th Party** ironically resulted in curtailment of organized labor activity. During the UAR, the Ba'thist Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs brazenly meddled with trade union elections to stuff the leadership with Ba'th Party members and banished trade union groups under the influence of the **Syrian Communist Party**. UAR president Gamal Abd al-Nasser revoked the 1946 Labor Law that had granted the right to strike. The new UAR code provided for closer government control of trade unions. When union leaders protested the new measures, Nasser had them arrested. The UAR did, however, pass an **agricultural** relations law that extended certain safeguards to peasants, including minimum wages, regulations on child and **women's** labor, and the right to form syndicates and engage in collective bargaining, but like other unions, peasants did not gain a legal right to strike and were barred from political activity.

The labor code changed again under the Ba'th Party regime, which passed a new law in 1964 that affirmed the right of union members to hold elections for their leadership, but the party undermined the independence of unions and turned them into instruments for controlling workers. First, the regime packed the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs with loyalists, and it then rigged union elections to defeat the more popular Nasserists. Likewise, the party took over the GFTU and established a General Peasants' Union along similar lines. The long-term effect of these measures was to rein in the historically restive and fractious trade unions. On the other hand, the regime depended on organized labor for political support and had to devote substantial, and often scarce, financial resources to pay for **public-sector** workers' benefits. The persistent political significance of labor was evident from the regime's appointment of the head of the GFTU to the highest government bodies deliberating economic policy, ensuring that workers' concerns were given a hearing, if not a decisive voice.

The close ties between the Asad regime and the labor movement have likely played a role in the general absence of unions from the **Syrian Uprising**, in contrast to the significant roles that labor movements played in **Egypt** and Tunisia in their respective revolutions in 2011. *See also* LABOR FORCE AND UNEMPLOYMENT.

LAHHAM, DURAYD AL- (1934–). Syria's most famous popular performer has a long string of accomplishments in **theater**, television, and **cinema**. Before discovering his acting talent, Lahham taught chemistry at **Damascus** University, but an opportunity to appear in a television series in 1960 led him to switch from **education** to entertainment.

Lahham's comic character Ghawar al-Tawsha combines elements of Damascene popular culture with Chaplinesque touches of social satire. His critical success and popular acclaim stem, in some measure, from his collaboration with another talented performer, Nihad al-Qal'i, as well as with leading literary figure **Muhammad al-Maghut**. Lahham's grip on Syrians' hearts reportedly reached the extent that even President **Hafiz al-Asad** granted him special dispensation in stretching the limits on political expression in his theatrical satires targeting **corruption** and hypocrisy.

Lahham's most celebrated work is the play *Here's to You, O Homeland* (1979), a bitter commentary on the manifold failures of political leaders that resonated with audiences throughout the Arab world. The play uses farce to address such grim matters as torture, as in the scene where a political prisoner laughs at his torturer, who is preparing to subject him to electrical shocks, because he knows that the country's endemic power cuts mean that there will be no electric current.

In the 1990s, Lahham turned to producing movies and television shows for children, an initiative that gained him recognition from the **United Nations** Children's Fund (UNICEF) and designation in 1991 as UNICEF's ambassador for children in the Middle East and North Africa. This international honor was preceded by a series of awards from Arab leaders and institutions. During the **Syrian Uprising**, Lahham has come under fire for his past support for the Asad regime.

LAJA', AL-. A 900-square-kilometer region in southwestern Syria that consists in large measure of lava flows. Because of its rugged topography, the area became a refuge for dissident groups and even outlaws at different times, hence the name "*al-laja'*," which means "the refuge." Its southern portion abuts the **Jabal Druze**, **Golan Heights**, and **Hawran** regions. During the 1st millennium BC, small towns and villages developed as the area combined **agriculture** and regional **trade** during the Roman and **Byzantine** eras.

During the 19th and 20th centuries, **Druzes** and **Bedouin** in southern Syria would retreat to al-Laja' when they rebelled against the **Ottomans** and **French Mandate** authorities.

LAKE ASAD. An artificial body of **water** created by the **Tabqa Dam** on the **Euphrates River** to store water for irrigation. The lake also supplies nearly all of **Aleppo's** drinking water.

LAND REFORM. During the last 60 years of **Ottoman** rule (c. 1860–1920), the bulk of cultivable land in central Syria from **Aleppo** to **Damascus** came under the control of urban absentee landlords. During the **French Mandate**, authorities continued the Ottoman effort at registering and surveying **agricultural** lands, as well as favoring the expansion of large estates. The first proposals to limit landholdings came from **Husni al-Za'im** in 1949. A legal basis for land reform was laid in the **constitution** of 1950, under **Adib al-Shishakli**, and political pressure for measures to reform tenure and land distribution came from **Akram al-Hawrani's Arab Socialist Party**. He convened a peasant conference at Aleppo in August 1951, to demonstrate mass support for land reform. The event succeeded in pushing parliament to pass a land reform bill in January 1952, but landlords then lobbied for it to be rescinded.

The first lasting measures were the **United Arab Republic's (UAR)** agrarian reforms of 1958. At the time, less than 1 percent of the rural population controlled about half of the cultivated lands. The UAR's reform established ceilings on private holdings of 80 hectares for irrigated land and 300 hectares for unirrigated land. By 1961, the government had taken about one-third of the land that could be expropriated, but only a tiny portion had been distributed to landless peasants. Another provision of the UAR land reform was the establishment of agricultural cooperatives.

Following Syria's secession from the UAR, a short-lived conservative government raised the ceilings on landholdings, but then a more radical cabinet restored the UAR ceilings and strengthened the land reform law to accelerate the distribution of land to peasants. Then, in 1963, the first regime of the **Ba'th Party** enacted amendments that lowered the ceiling on allowable holdings, thereby increasing the amount of land liable to expropriation and distribution. From 1965 to 1971, Ba'thist regimes implemented the expropriation and distribution of land. These measures created a large class of peasants with medium-size holdings and reduced the share of large landowners to about 10 percent of cultivated lands. While the various phases of land reform certainly created more equitable conditions in the countryside, they also had a disruptive effect on production in the first decade before it recovered in the 1970s.

The results of land reform have fallen far short of achieving equitable distribution. Because poor peasants received small, unirrigated parcels and had only limited access to machinery and credit, they frequently fell into debt and relinquished their plots or rented them to others. For the most part, land reform did not improve the welfare of the rural poor, who have become landless laborers and sharecroppers or migrated to cities. On the other hand, peasants with medium-sized estates fared better and did benefit from such new institutions as the Peasants Union and cooperatives. As for the old class of large landowners, many of them held on to large estates at the same time that high-ranking military officers and government officials formed a new class of wealthy landowners by investing in choice rural properties.

Forty years after land reform, the main changes have been the growth in number and wealth of medium-sized estates, the emergence of new large landowners, and the prominent role of government agencies in setting procurement prices for key crops and providing technical and credit facilities.

LANGUAGES. About 90 percent of Syrians speak Arabic as their mother tongue. Differences between regional dialects are noticeable, but they are not so great as to hamper easy interaction among citizens. They are, however, a source of light humor in popular culture, with **Aleppans** making fun of **Damascenes** for their lilt and Damascenes returning the favor for the heavier Aleppan accent. Arabic is the official language and is taught at all schools. As in other Arab countries, the gap between spoken Arabic and formal written Arabic, known as diglossia, is quite significant and a formidable obstacle to the acquisition of a high degree of literacy.

Even though a large majority of citizens are Arab, there are several other languages still spoken and used in **Christian** religious services. Such linguistic pluralism is a vestige of premodern society before the rise of political and economic pressures for cultural homogeneity. **Kurdish** is spoken by approximately 10 percent of the population. Since the **United Arab Republic**, Kurdish-language **education** has been prohibited in schools, and except for a few spells of political leniency, it has been illegal to publish Kurdish-language books or periodicals. Because Syrian Kurds form part of a much larger Kurdish community that straddles **Iraq**, **Turkey**, and **Iran**, they are likely to preserve their language for the foreseeable future.

A small number of Syrian citizens speak languages other than Arabic or Kurdish, but the long-term tendency is for the young generation to Arabize because of national education and economic integration. The close-knit **Armenian** community keeps its language alive in the home and the liturgy of its churches. Aramaic is spoken in a handful of villages in the vicinity of Damascus and is probably a dying language, except for liturgical purposes. A related language, Syriac, is spoken by the **Assyrians** who live in the northeast along the **Khabur River**. **Circassian** is the language of Muslim **refu-**

gees from **Russian** expansion in the Caucasus during the late 1800s. Circassian villages in and near the **Golan Heights** preserved their ancestral tongue. Finally, there is a small, scattered population of **Turkomen** who speak a Turkic language. They are descendants of Turkish nomads who settled in the region during **Ottoman** times and for centuries preserved a distinct identity but like other small language groups are tending to Arabize.

LATAKIA. The major port of northern Syria and an ancient Phoenician settlement, it is named for the mother (Laodice) of the Seleucid ruler who laid out the Hellenistic city. Latakia is in the middle of a fertile coastal region at the western edge of **Jabal Ansariyya**. Although it was a major city in Greek and Roman times, its significance diminished in the **Islamic** era. When **France** ruled Syria, however, it made Latakia the capital of a separate **Alawi** state. The city's importance to Syria's future was determined by the 1938 cession of **Alexandretta**, which traditionally served as northern Syria's port, to **Turkey**. After independence, the Syrian government funded a project to enlarge and improve Latakia's port (1950–1957). The growth of **trade** required a second project (1958–1968). As one of Syria's primary ports, Latakia exports bitumen, asphalt, cereals, cotton, fruit, eggs, vegetable oil, tobacco, and pottery. The city's main **industries** are cotton-ginning, processing vegetable oil, tanning, and sponge fishing. The city's population has grown from 7,000 at the turn of the century to about 650,000.

During the **Syrian Uprising**, Latakia has become a focal point for confrontations between protesters and the government. In July 2011, **security forces** suppressed demonstrations, and the government restricted the flow of food and medical supplies. In mid-August, the regime responded to a resurgence of protests by sending in the Syrian Army, with tanks shelling residential neighborhoods and infantry raiding homes to make arrests. The Syrian Navy also took part in the shelling. The government briefly pacified Latakia, but it remains a battleground between the government and opposition forces.

LATIN AMERICA. Starting around 2008, President **Bashar al-Asad** decided to bolster Syria's **trade** with Latin America to increase Syria's trading options at a time of strains in relations with the **European Union** and **United States**. He hoped that Latin America would offer trade opportunities free of the political restraints that hampered Syria in its dealings with the West. This new strategy was the motivation behind Asad's June 2010 multination tour aimed at shoring up investment opportunities among South America's rising economic players. The Syrian leader negotiated several business ventures and economic agreements with key countries, including **Brazil**, **Venezuela**, and **Argentina**. Warm receptions for Asad from notable anti-Western leaders, particularly with Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez and Cuban leader

Raúl Castro, underscored the political angle. The presidential tour tapped the resources of wealthy Syrian expatriates who represented a potential source of foreign investment.

Following the launch of the Syrian–Brazilian Business Council in November 2011, representatives entered into negotiations with the Brazilian International Negotiations Department to hash out details for a trade agreement between **Damascus** and the South American Mercosur trade bloc, which included Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, and Paraguay. An initial proposal was signed in December 2011, outlining the foundations for the removal of tariff and nontariff barriers between Syria and the bloc. The deal was expected to yield roughly \$55 billion in trade during the next five years, but nothing came of it due to disruptions to the Syrian **economy** caused by the **Syrian Uprising**.

LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES (ARAB LEAGUE). In 1943, **Egyptian** prime minister Mustafa al-Nahhas conducted talks with delegations from Syria, **Iraq**, **Lebanon**, **Saudi Arabia**, and **Transjordan** with a view to establishing a framework for Arab cooperation. Nahhas then persuaded the governments of those countries to send representatives to Alexandria to constitute a preparatory committee that would pave the way for founding a Pan-Arab organization. The preparatory committee, including the prime ministers of Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, and Transjordan, duly convened in September 1944. On 7 October, they approved the Alexandria Protocol, which called for the creation of the League of Arab States to promote political, economic, social, and cultural cooperation. Negotiations for the text of the league's pact were completed in March 1945, and the league was formally established on 10 May 1945. It has provided a framework for inter-Arab relations and the resolution of conflict, although its effectiveness has been hamstrung by bitter disputes among member states.

LEAGUE OF NATIONAL ACTION. A Pan-Arab nationalist movement founded in 1933, as a public successor to the secret Arab Liberation Society, which had been created in 1929 and modeled on the **Ottoman**-era Arab societies **al-Fatat** and **al-Ahd**. The league's Pan-Arab ideology clearly distinguished it from the **National Bloc**, which focused on independence for Syria. In accord with its ideology, the League of National Action established branches in **Iraq** and **Palestine**. Although dissatisfied with the Bloc's moderation toward **French Mandate** authorities, the league lacked a mass base and therefore tended to cooperate with the Bloc. The **French** banned the league in March 1939. The ephemeral body's chief importance was as the political

incubator of such important personalities as **Akram al-Hawrani**, **Zaki al-Arsuzi**, and Jalal al-Sayyid, all of whom became involved in other political movements in the 1940s.

LEBANESE CIVIL WAR. This tragic conflict lasted from 1975 to 1990 and was the occasion for Syrian military intervention and occupation of much of the country. The civil war had its roots in long-simmering political tensions regarding a variety of issues, the central one in domestic affairs being the distribution of power in **Lebanon's** political system. These tensions erupted into full-blown civil war in April 1975. On one side, leftist Lebanese and **Palestinian** militias fought for fundamental changes in Lebanon's political system, economic policy, and the government's stance toward the large Palestinian **refugee** population; on the other side, largely Maronite **Christian** militias supported the political status quo. In June 1976, Syrian forces entered Lebanon to prevent a victory by leftist Palestinian forces. A stable cease-fire was negotiated among the various parties in October 1976.

The failure of Lebanon's various factions and militias to agree on a political resolution for the civil war prolonged Syria's occupation of much of the country. From 1977 to 1978, Syria's brief alliance with the Maronites broke down as the latter turned to **Israel** for support against the Palestinians and Lebanese left. A new element arose in 1981, when the Lebanese Forces under Bashir Gemayel consolidated hegemony over the hitherto divided Maronite community and developed an alliance with Israel. Gemayel wanted Israel to invade Lebanon to force the Syrians out. In pursuit of this aim, he launched an attempt to take over the Bekaa Valley town of Zahle in April 1981. The Syrians counterattacked, and it took intensive diplomatic mediation by the **United States** to prevent the outbreak of hostilities between Israel and Syria. Gemayel's hopes for Israeli intervention, however, were merely delayed until Israel's June 1982 invasion began the **Lebanese War of 1982**. Despite Israel's military victory, Syria was able to regain its dominant position in Lebanon by the end of 1985 but could not bring about a resolution of the civil conflict.

The last chapter of the civil war began with the expiration of President Amin Gemayel's term in September 1988 and the failure of parliament to elect a successor. Gemayel designated General Michel Aoun as head of a caretaker government, but the cabinet refused to recognize Aoun and insisted on its sole legitimacy to represent the government. Syria attempted to devise a formula for political reform to end the crisis, but Aoun declared that a Syrian withdrawal must precede any discussion of reform and proclaimed a war of liberation to expel Syrian troops from the country. Arab mediation led to the **Ta'if Accord** of October 1989, providing for changes in the political system, but Aoun rejected the accord and the governments of first René Muawad and then Ilyas Hrawi, elected according to its terms. Lebanon wit-

nessed some of the war's worst fighting from 1989 to 1990, as the Lebanese became divided between Aoun's enthusiastic followers and his enemies backed by Syria. The stalemate was broken in October 1990, after Syria agreed to participate in the coalition against **Iraq's** annexation of Kuwait. In a gesture of gratitude, the United States gave Syria the green light to carry out an air attack on Aoun at the presidential palace, forcing him to flee to the **French** embassy and ending his challenge to Syrian domination. Lebanon then slowly reconstituted itself along the lines laid down by the Ta'if Accord in spite of simmering sectarian tensions and persistent regional rivalries.

LEBANESE WAR OF 1982. In June 1982, **Israel** invaded **Lebanon** to destroy the **Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)**, which had established its headquarters in Beirut in the early 1970s. Syria initially stayed out of the conflict, but Israeli forces attacked Syrian troops in the Bekaa Valley, destroyed Syria's surface-to-air missile installations in Lebanon, and inflicted a huge defeat on the Syrian Air Force. Nonetheless, the bulk of Syrian ground forces merely staged a limited retreat to more defensible positions within Lebanon, while a smaller number participated in defending Beirut against Israel. Meanwhile, the Soviet Union, chagrined at the dismal performance of its missile defense systems, resupplied the Syrian Army and Syrian Air Force. On the other hand, Israel's eight-week siege of Beirut succeeded in forcing the PLO to withdraw from Lebanon by the end of August. Israel also engineered the election of its Lebanese ally Bashir Gemayel to the presidency with the expectation that he would negotiate a peace treaty and pressure Syrian forces to withdraw. Gemayel, however, was assassinated in early September and succeeded by his brother Amin Gemayel, who was less beholden to Israeli interests. After Bashir's assassination, **Christian** militia-men carried out a massacre of **Palestinian** civilians in two Beirut **refugee** camps. An Israeli government inquiry found several officials indirectly responsible for the atrocity at Sabra and Shatila camps. Furthermore, the massacres led to the deployment of a multinational force of American, **French**, and Italian troops, and the **United States** decided to keep its troops in Lebanon to support the Amin Gemayel government.

There followed an American initiative to arrange a treaty between Israel and Lebanon. Amin Gemayel's government negotiated an agreement with Israel that was signed on 17 May 1983. The agreement granted Israel the right to establish permanent surveillance posts in the south, as well as to conduct land and air patrols. It also made an Israeli withdrawal contingent on one by Syria. In response, Syria rallied Lebanese forces that opposed the agreement and Gemayel's bid to restore Lebanon's pre-civil war political structure. By the beginning of 1984, Syria had forced Gemayel to abandon the May 1983 agreement with Israel. Moreover, Syrian support for Lebanese guerrilla attacks against Israeli soldiers induced Israeli leaders to withdraw

their troops to a strip of territory in southern Lebanon that Israel declared its security zone. In February 1984, President Gemayel formally revoked the accord with Israel. The aftermath of the war lasted another 16 years, until May 2000, when Israel withdrew its troops following a protracted guerrilla war against **Hizballah** and other Syrian-backed Lebanese groups.

LEBANESE WAR OF 2006. A five-week conflict between **Hizballah** and **Israel** began when Israel retaliated against Hizballah rockets and an attack on a border town that resulted in the deaths and kidnappings of several Israeli soldiers. On 12 July 2006, Israel launched air strikes, followed by a naval blockade and a ground invasion of southern **Lebanon**. The war took longer than the Israeli government expected due to Hizballah's extensive stockpiles of sophisticated weapons supplied by allies Syria and **Iran**. During the course of the war, international public opinion turned against Israel for using disproportionate force that inflicted heavy casualties on civilians caught in the middle. On 14 August, a cease-fire took effect. Its terms called for disarmament of Hizballah, withdrawal of Israeli troops from Lebanon, and deployment of the **United Nations** Interim Force in the battered country. In the war's aftermath, an international investigation commission accused both Israeli and Hizballah officials of violating international humanitarian laws. The militant group was specifically indicted for crimes against humanity. The conflict killed more than 1,000 people, leveled entire cities, and displaced almost 1 million civilians in Lebanon and approximately 400,000 in Israel.

LEBANON. In the late **Ottoman** era, a special regime was established in Mount Lebanon, the central mountainous region of the present-day country. When **France** took over Syria and Lebanon after **World War I**, it formally divided the two and enlarged the province of Mount Lebanon by attaching to it predominantly Muslim regions to its north, east, and south, including the port cities of Beirut, Tripoli, Sidon, and Tyre. Reattachment of these districts and cities to Syria was a popular nationalist issue among Lebanese Muslims and Syrian nationalists during the early **French Mandate** period. By the outbreak of **World War II**, however, the permanence of Lebanon's boundaries had won grudging acceptance among Syrian and Lebanese Muslim leaders, although popular political movements in both countries would continue to oppose the new map.

In the independence era, a dispute arose between Lebanon and Syria regarding their unified customs regime, which dated to the French Mandate era. France had treated them as a unified administration until 1937, when the Lebanese and Syrian governments agreed to separate them, but could not reach accord on the division of revenues. In March 1950, the **Khalid al-Azm** government terminated the customs union, a move that caused severe disrup-

tion to the Syrian **economy**. The dispute ended two years later. Relations between the neighbors remained tense for much of the 1950s because Syria adopted a neutral **foreign policy** and one opposed to Lebanon's pro-Western orientation. This difference became most evident in 1958, shortly after the formation of the **United Arab Republic**, when Lebanese **Arab nationalists** agitated for adherence to the union. Lebanon's president, Camille Chamoun, invoked the **Eisenhower Doctrine**, which promised American support against communist subversion, and U.S. Marines landed in Lebanon to shore up the government. In the 1960s, Syria's **Ba'th Party** regimes castigated Lebanon for maintaining a pro-Western stance.

In the 1970s, Syria viewed Lebanon through the prism of its own strategic security vis-à-vis **Israel**. The loss of the **Golan Heights** in the **June 1967 War** and instability in Lebanon caused Syrian leaders to fear an Israeli attack through Lebanese territory. Consequently, after its 1976 intervention in the **Lebanese Civil War**, Syria insisted that any resolution of that conflict take into consideration its strategic interests. To maintain a dominant position, **Damascus** cultivated tactical alliances with Lebanese **Druze**, **Shi'i**, and **Sunni** groups to block the rise of radical political forces or triumph of conservative elements backed by Israel. The most severe threat to Syria's position in Lebanon came during the **Lebanese War of 1982**, when Israel invaded and occupied much of the country. Syria was able to dig in and assist the Lebanese militias that waged a guerrilla struggle against Israeli forces, which compelled Israeli leaders to withdraw their troops to a narrow band of territory in the far south.

In 1989–1990, Syria played an important part in resolving the Lebanese Civil War and implementing the **Ta'if Accord** by disarming most of the militias, but even with the end of civil war, Syria kept 35,000 troops in Lebanon to ensure control over Beirut's foreign policy and influence on its domestic affairs, as well as to buttress its own military position in relation to Israel. For the Lebanese, Syrian hegemony was part of the heavy price they paid to end the civil war.

During the 1980s and 1990s, Israel's occupation of a strip of Lebanese territory along the border, referred to as a "security zone," was the cause of persistent fighting. On one side, Israeli forces and their proxy allies, the South Lebanese Army, patrolled the zone to prevent infiltration into Israel. On the other side, **Hizballah** and other groups fought a guerrilla war to force Israeli troops out. In April 1996, Israeli prime minister Shimon Peres decided that Hizballah had gone too far in its attacks on Israeli troops, so he ordered a massive military strike called "Grapes of Wrath." Peres hoped to deter further attacks and bolster his domestic position on the eve of national elections. The two-week operation utterly failed to change the situation to Israel's advantage and brought a torrent of international criticism when an errant Israeli shell killed more than 100 civilians. In 1998, the Israeli government

proposed withdrawing on condition that the Lebanese government would guarantee its security, but Syria blocked such a deal. As long as Israel did not budge from the Golan Heights, Damascus saw Israel's presence in southern Lebanon as an opportunity to inflict casualties through Hizballah without risking direct military confrontation or escalation. In May 2000, however, Israeli prime minister Ehud Barak withdrew all forces in a rapid and somewhat disorganized fashion. That maneuver ostensibly removed a point where Syria could exert pressure on Israel, but both Beirut and Damascus subsequently insisted that Israel had not completely evacuated and claimed that Israel's occupation of a small enclave known as Shab'a Farms meant that Hizballah would continue to attack its troops there. Israel's insistence that it had indeed evacuated all of Lebanon was upheld by a **United Nations (UN)** survey that declared Shab'a Farms part of Syrian territory that Israel seized in the June 1967 War. Nevertheless, Hizballah continued to strike at Israeli troops from time to time.

In the years after the Lebanese Civil War, Syria's military forces and its extensive network of security agents made Damascus the power broker in Lebanon's domestic politics. Disputes between parties, leaders, and factions often were resolved in Damascus rather than among the Lebanese themselves. In the 1996 parliamentary elections, for example, candidate lists reflected the interference of Syrian envoys, and the majority of seats went to pro-Syrian candidates. At the time of the 1998 presidential election, Syrian president **Hafiz al-Asad** essentially gave the nod to Émile Lahoud for the office, and that was that. The Syrians seem to have interfered less in the August–September 2000 national elections that gave a landslide victory to **Rafiq al-Hariri** for the prime minister's office.

The ubiquitous Syrian **security forces** operated outside the bounds of Lebanese law and were known to have abducted Lebanese and **Palestinian** activists and transported them to prisons in Syria. In March 1998, the Syrians released more than 100 Lebanese men it had abducted since 1978, primarily members of the **Iraqi** wing of the Ba`th Party and **Islamic fundamentalists**. In December 2000, Damascus set free another 54 Lebanese whom it had detained at various times since 1985. Many Lebanese deeply resented their neighbor's meddling in politics and the influx of as many as 1 million Syrian workers filling low-wage jobs in construction and services. Opposition to Syrian domination took the forms of public criticism and occasional violence. While the boldest voices for a Syrian pullout usually came from Maronite **Christian** institutions and political organizations, Lebanese of other religious communities generally shared the sentiment. Militant Lebanese underground groups carried out sporadic attacks on Syrian workers, and bombings inside Syria were attributed to them. Notwithstanding public criticism and occasional attacks, Syrian president **Bashar al-Asad** openly declared in February 2001 that Syria would keep its forces in Lebanon as long

as Israel occupied the Golan Heights. Nevertheless, he ordered partial redeployments of troops to diminish their presence in largely Christian areas. Maronite Christian political leaders had agitated for such a move for a decade. In addition to these shifts, the number of troops shrank to about 20,000.

In September 2004, Damascus leaned on its political allies in the Lebanese parliament to pass an amendment to the **constitution** that would exempt Syrian-backed president Lahoud from term limits. The move was more significant than politicians could have expected. In response to yet another instance of blatant Syrian interference in Lebanese political affairs, Prime Minister Hariri announced his resignation, signaling his personal break with the Asad regime. The UN Security Council responded by adopting an American- and French-sponsored resolution that called for all foreign forces to leave Lebanon and pressured Beirut into rejecting Syrian influence in its political and social affairs.

On 14 February 2005, a massive explosion in Beirut killed Hariri, along with 21 of his close friends and bodyguards. Despite having profited from the **corruption** associated with the Syrian presence, Hariri was beginning to ally himself with a coalition of anti-Syrian Lebanese politicians who supported a Syrian withdrawal. International condemnation following Hariri's assassination was severe. The UN established a commission to investigate the killing while simultaneously stepping up pressure on President Asad to completely remove Syrian troops and intelligence personnel from Lebanon in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 1559. At the same time, Lebanese opposition to Syria erupted in the **Cedar Revolution**, a movement to shake off domination by Damascus. Under intense international and local pressure, Bashar al-Asad announced that all Syrian ground forces and intelligence services would pull out from Lebanon. On 26 April 2005, nearly 30 years of Syrian armed presence in Lebanon ended (a UN verification team confirmed the evacuation).

Following the withdrawal of Syrian troops, relations with Lebanon entered a new phase. Syrian efforts to ensure the July 2006 cease-fire agreement between Hizballah and Israel, as well as President Asad's cooperation with France in backing stability, improved his image in Lebanon. On 14 October 2008, Asad established diplomatic relations between Syria and Lebanon for the first time. The move signaled a definitive change in Syrian policy, as it was a formal recognition of Lebanon's independence and sovereignty. Lebanese president Michel Suleiman visited Damascus to cement ties and discuss the opening of an embassy. Even Lebanese opposition leader Sa'd al-Hariri, who had spearheaded anti-Syrian political forces since the assassination of his father, Rafiq al-Hariri, described the event as a historic step. After the junior Hariri's March 14 alliance won parliamentary elections in 2009, he

undertook a state visit to Damascus for talks with President Asad, and the following year he retracted his accusations that Syria was complicit in the murder of his father.

The **Syrian Uprising** has exacerbated sectarian tensions in Lebanon, as Shi'is and Hizballah strongly support the Asad regime, while Sunnis sympathize with the opposition. As Syria's political dynamics have shifted from street demonstrations to armed clashes, violence has spilled into Lebanon, particularly in the northern port city of Tripoli, where Sunni–**Alawi** communal violence has a history of flaring up. Hizballah's commitment of fighters to the Syrian government side in the spring of 2013 triggered an escalation in hostility between Sunnis and Shi'is and has the potential to widen the Syrian conflict. *See also* HARIRI, RAFIQ AL-, ASSASSINATION.

LEGAL SYSTEM. Syria's modern legal framework began to take shape during the **Tanzimat** era, when **Ottoman** statesmen drew up new codes for commercial, penal, and civil law. The last major legal initiative under Ottoman auspices was a Family Relations Law, passed in 1917. This measure slightly modified marriage and divorce law in favor of **women** but essentially preserved **Islamic** law (**shari'a**) as the foundation for **family** relations. The **French Mandate** era saw little alteration in the legal system because of failure to advance toward a constitutional form of self-government under mandatory authority. In the first few years after independence, the Syrian government enacted legal codes for commercial, civil, criminal, and penal matters. The last area to be codified was personal status law, which passed in 1953, as the Syrian Code of Personal Status. It combines elements from the Ottoman and **Egyptian** law.

Syria has six different kinds of courts. The highest court in the land is the Supreme Constitutional Court, composed of a chief justice and four other justices. Each member is appointed by the president of the republic to serve a four-year term. This court's jurisdiction encompasses the constitutionality of laws, election irregularities, conflicts between lower courts, and charges of misconduct by the president of the republic. The next highest level, the court of appeal, is represented in each of Syria's 54 districts. The courts of appeal are divided into three separate branches to deal with criminal, penal, and civil matters. A third category, the tribunal of first instance, is where most legal criminal and civil cases begin. Then there are 227 tribunals of the peace to adjudicate civil and penal matters. The influence of the government is weakest in the realm of so-called personal status issues, for instance, marriage, divorce, and inheritance. Special courts handle such matters according to separate customary rules for Muslims, **Druzes**, Orthodox **Christians**, Roman **Catholics**, and Protestants. Finally, there are courts for minors.

The judiciary's independence is compromised by the existence of a parallel network of military and state security courts. These courts first appeared under the **United Arab Republic** and had jurisdiction over "economic crimes" involving **currency** transactions and foreign **trade**. They operate without civilian oversight or regard for due process. The lack of transparency and **corruption** led the International Chamber of Commerce to rank Syria 174th out of 181 countries in enforcing contracts.

Bashar al-Asad recognized that reforming the legal system would be a necessary part of its modernization plan. In October 2005, the government fired 81 judges for corruption. In an effort to attract more qualified judges, the government increased their wages and insurance benefits in conjunction with tax reductions. *See also* HUMAN RIGHTS; SECURITY FORCES.

LITERATURE. Throughout history, Syrian literature has encompassed the genres of Arabic literature found from **Iraq** to North Africa. Since pre-Islamic times, Arabs have considered poetry the highest literary form, and two of Arabic poetry's great geniuses, **Abu al-Tayyib al-Mutanabbi** and **Abu al-Ala al-Ma'arri**, were from Syria. Other traditional literary genres included popular storytelling; rhymed prose; and religious, often mystical (**Sufi**), verse. The modern history of Arabic literature began in the 19th century with a movement called *al-nahda*, the Arab renaissance. The most influential figures in the Arab renaissance came from **Egypt** and **Lebanon**, but Francis Marrash (1836–1873) of **Aleppo** contributed to neoclassical poetry and the development of didactic fiction in the direction of the novel.

During the 20th century, Syria produced a larger number of significant poets, novelists, and short-story writers who not only participated in Arabic literary creativity, but also pioneered new experiments in expression. The short story is the most fully developed genre in modern Syrian fiction. Authors have written in a wide variety of styles, including socialist realism, symbolism, and surrealism. Common themes range from political commentary to social criticism of customs that value conformity rather than individual expression and fulfillment by pursuing higher **education** and a professional career as opposed to finding satisfaction in customary domestic life. Some writers focus on the depiction of particular settings, for example, the Syrian village or traditional urban quarter.

The first modern short-story writer was Fuad al-Shayib (1910–1970). He published an important anthology on the eve of independence that marked a shift from old-fashioned morality tales to more realistic and harsher themes. Since the 1960s, two **women** authors, Colette al-Khuri (b. 1937 in **Damascus**) and Ghada al-Samman (b. 1942 in Damascus), have attained prominence in the growing field of Arab women's literature. Their short stories and

novels criticize the general cultural preference for boys, arranged marriage, and double standards for sexual fulfillment that wink at men's indiscretions while tolerating **honor killings**.

The first novels came out during the **French Mandate** era and celebrated the heroes of Islamic history and resistance to colonial domination. Abd al-Salam al-Ujayli (b. 1918 in **al-Raqqa**) is the first major Syrian novelist and one of the most prolific writers whose oeuvre includes stories, novels, plays, and poetry. He is noted for incorporating political themes dealing with socialism, communism, Arab unity, and the plight of economic backwardness. Hanna Mina (b. 1924 in **Latakia**) may be the country's most popular novelist. Since his first work came out in 1954, he has gained renown for recording daily life in rural settings before electricity and paved roads. A different slice of traditional life is found in the novels and short stories of Ulfat Idilbi, who gives a woman's perspective on the settings and relationships in Muslim **family** life in the old quarters of Damascus.

Since the 1960s, experimental approaches to fiction have become more common, and they are well represented in the works of Egyptian immigrant Walid Ikhlasī (b. 1935). Many of his works create a mood rather than develop a plot, and they frequently express alienation. Another experimental writer, **Haydar Haydar**, unintentionally sparked a political storm in Egypt with *Banquet for Seaweed* (1983), his novel exploring the bankruptcy of Arab politics.

In the sphere of modern Arabic poetry, Syria's contributions have fit into broader regional trends alongside those from Egyptian, Iraqi, and Lebanese poets. Syria's poets of the 1920s and 1930s reflected the nationalist mood by recalling the heroes of Arab history. After 1948, the combative spirit of **Palestinian** poetry influenced Syrians like Sulayman al-Isa, himself displaced from Antioch after **Turkey** annexed **Alexandretta**.

Since the mid-1960s, three Syrians have made their mark on the Arab literary scene. They are **Nizar Qabbani**, for his daring erotic poetry; **Adonis**, for his bold, erudite experiments in form and diction, as well as his penetrating critical essays; and **Muhammad al-Maghut**, for his highly personal form of expression in nonmetrical prose poems. A number of Syrian women have also left their mark on contemporary poetry. The most prominent include al-Maghut's late wife, Saniya Salih (1935–1984), and Samar al-'Attar (b. 1945), who is also a novelist. *See also* QABBANI, AHMAD ABU KHALIL AL- (c. 1833–1902); WANNUS, SA'DALLAH AL- (1941–1997).

M

MA'ARRI, ABU AL-ALA AL- (973–1058). One of the great masters of classical Arabic poetry and prose. Ma'arri spent most of his life in his native town, Ma'arrat al-Nu'man, a northern Syrian town between **Homs** and **Aleppo**. As a small child, he was stricken by smallpox and became blind. He is known as the “twofold prisoner” because of his blindness and decision to seclude himself in his room at the **family** home after his mother’s death in 1010. The poet was also renowned for his asceticism, which included an austere vegetarian diet and a vow to never marry or have children. In fact, Ma'arri requested that the inscription on his grave read, “This wrong was by my father done to me, but never by me to anyone.” He lived during the era of **Hamdanid** decline and **Mirdasid** ascendancy, a period of disarray and strife in northern Syria as the **Fatimids** and **Byzantines** contended for domination of the region. Around 1008, Ma'arri traveled to Baghdad, which had once been the peerless center of Arabic literary culture, but he found only a shadow of its former greatness. When he returned to Syria, he learned that his mother had just died. During nearly 50 years of seclusion, he corresponded with poets and officials in Syria, **Iraq**, and **Egypt**; for instance, he entered a debate with a Fatimid scholar who challenged the virtue of his vegetarianism.

His pensive, brooding poetry reflects a deep contemplation of religious and philosophical themes. Ma'arri expressed a strong faith in God, but he doubted the reality of resurrection, a fundamental tenet of **Islam**, and emphasized the power of human reason. Such views caused some Muslims to call into question his religious orthodoxy. His contributions to Arabic prose include a commentary on contemporary political events and personalities delivered by animals, but his better-known work is “The Epistle of Forgiveness.” In this work, prompted by an epistle from an Aleppan scholar, Ma'arri presents a drama set in Paradise and Hell that has led some modern critics to posit it, rather doubtfully, as an influence on Dante’s *Divine Comedy*.

MADRASA. A Muslim religious school. For centuries, it was the most widespread form of organized learning in the Muslim world. A madrasa customarily consisted of a mosque, a school, and rooms for student lodgers.

The institution first appeared in eastern **Iran** during the 11th century and spread westward. The first madrasa in Syria was erected in 1098, under a **Saljuk** prince of **Damascus**. **Nur al-Din Mahmud** (r. 1146–1174) and **Saladin** (r. 1174–1193) were the first avid builders of madrasas in Syria, and **Ayyubid** and **Mamluk** rulers later emulated them. By 1500, Damascus alone had more than 120 madrasas. The typical madrasa took a rectangular shape. One entered the main courtyard through an elaborately sculpted portal. The courtyard had one or more arcades along the perimeter and an interior prayer hall. The legal instrument for establishing a madrasa was a **waqf**, a deed of property and its income for charitable purposes in perpetuity. The donor usually specified how it was to be administered and what subjects were to be taught. In most instances, the major focus of instruction was **Islamic** jurisprudence, or *fiqh*, according to one of the four traditional **Sunni** schools of law (sing. *madhhab*). Donors often created endowments for teachers' stipends and students' lodging and a food allowance.

From the 11th century until the late 19th century, the madrasa represented the pinnacle of learning. In the era of **Ottoman** reform, however, Western forms and curricula began to displace the institution. In modern times, higher learning in Islamic sciences has been incorporated into Damascus University's College of Islamic Law.

MADRID CONFERENCE. An international conference on the Arab–Israeli conflict held from 30 October to 3 November 1991. After U.S. and coalition forces, including Syria, expelled **Iraq** from Kuwait, the George H. W. Bush administration took a bold diplomatic initiative to bring all parties to the Arab–Israeli conflict into a comprehensive process to reach a peace settlement. In July 1991, Syria announced its agreement to attend such an international conference, which was sponsored by the **United States** and the Soviet Union. The Madrid Conference marked the first time since the **Armistice of 1949** talks that Syrian and **Israeli** representatives met in an official diplomatic forum. The conference itself was more ceremonial than substantial, but it marked a major breakthrough in attempts to end the conflict. It was followed by bilateral talks held in Washington and multilateral talks held at various sites in Europe and the Middle East. Syria refused to attend the multilateral talks on arms control, **water**, economic development, and the **environment**. Bilateral **Syrian–Israeli peace talks** continued intermittently throughout the 1990s, but they failed to reach a settlement. *See also* FOREIGN POLICY.

MAGAZINES. *See* NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES.

MAGHUT, MUHAMMAD AL- (1934–2006). Poet, playwright, and journalist. This versatile man of letters is best known for his contributions to modernist poetry, but Maghut also made a mark with short stories and plays. In the more popular medium of television screenwriting, he collaborated with noted comic **Durayd al-Lahham** to create scripts for the actor's widely acclaimed character Ghawar al-Tawsha. Maghut was born in **Salamiyya**, a medium-size provincial town. Even though he did not have an advanced formal **education** in Arabic **literature** and was unfamiliar with modern European literature, he received critical acclaim for his first poetry anthology, published in 1959. For many years, Maghut lived in Beirut and participated in its lively literary scene. He then lived for a time in **Damascus**, but, like many creative writers and intellectuals, he found the repressive political climate intolerable and moved to the Gulf.

Maghut's poetry is notable for its concrete similes and absence of the sort of pedantic allusions to classical Arabic phrases and modern European trends that are commonly found in modern Arabic verse. He eschewed classical poetic forms and meter, preferring a more direct mode of composition. His oeuvre encompasses an impressive range of themes. They frequently convey the feeling of a villager adrift and lonely in the indifferent city. Maghut, himself from a small provincial town, often used rural imagery, for instance, the desert, **Bedouins**, blossoms, and birds. Omens of death, pain, and hunger litter his poems. He was capable of causing even the distant reader to shudder at his images of the bleak political and social landscapes of Arab countries and the sheer terror of living in the shadow of omnipotent **security forces** (*mukhabarat*). In a more personal vein, Maghut dedicated poems to his wife and fellow poet, Saniyya Salih. For his poetry, he was awarded the Syrian First Rank of Merit Medal by President **Bashar al-Asad** in 2005, and just a month before he died, the Sultan Al-Uways Emirati Foundation awarded him the Prize for Poetry.

MAKHLUF. The family of **Hafiz al-Asad's** wife, **Anisa Makhluḥ**, the Makhluḥs belong to a powerful **Alawi** clan, the Haddad. Anisa's brothers and nephews from the Makhluḥ family became influential and wealthy during the decades of Asad rule in Syria.

MAKHLUF, ADNAN. Cousin of former first lady **Anisa Makhluḥ**. Adnan served under **Rif at al-Asad's** Defense Companies before becoming a commander of the Syrian Republican Guard. He was responsible for protecting the presidential palace, central **Damascus**, and selective residential areas inhabited by high-level officials. In the mid-1980s, he joined with other powerful security chiefs to oppose Rif at al-Asad's bid for power. As a member of **Hafiz al-Asad's** old guard, Adnan was let go during a purge of

lifelong advisers in a strategic move made in anticipation of **Bashar al-Asad's** succession as president of Syria. He retired in 1995, paving the way for a smooth transfer of power and a new body of presidential advisers.

MAKHLUF, ANISA (1934–). Former first lady of Syria and wife of **Hafiz al-Asad**. Notoriously private and often hidden from public view, Anisa was widely recognized as a pillar of **family** cohesiveness. The couple had five children together, **Bushra al-Asad**, **Basil al-Asad**, **Bashar al-Asad**, **Mahir al-Asad**, and **Majd Hafiz al-Asad**, all of whom have played a prominent role in Syrian politics and society.

MAKHLUF, HAFIZ (1971–). Maternal cousin of **Bashar al-Asad**. Colonel Hafiz Makhluḥ is a prominent member of the leader's inner circle and younger brother to **Rami Makhluḥ**. He is a senior official at the General Security Directorate in **Damascus** and was a survivor in the 1994 car crash that killed **Basil al-Asad**. Hafiz has been sanctioned several times by the **United States** and **European Union (EU)** for his involvement in state-sponsored **terrorist** activities, interference in **Lebanese** politics, and violence against civilians participating in antigovernment demonstrations. In 2007, the George W. Bush administration issued Executive Order 13441 imposing an asset freeze and business ban on Hafiz for political interference in Lebanon that undermined its democratic institutions. The largely symbolic sanctions were renewed in 2009 by President Barack Obama. During the **Syrian Uprising**, the U.S. Department of the Treasury announced sanctions against several top Syrian officials believed to have used excessive force against protesters, including Hafiz. Executive Order 13572, issued in May 2011, accused the official of brutally repressing demonstrations in **Dar'a**. The EU assigned similar sanctions against the officer due to his close ties to **Mahir al-Asad** and his complicity in harsh suppression of demonstrations.

MAKHLUF, IHAB (1973–). Twin brother of **Iyad Makhluḥ** and maternal cousin of **Bashar al-Asad**. Ihab's close relationship with sibling **Rami Makhluḥ** has been lucrative for the ruling **family**. After controversial litigation issues, Ihab was appointed caretaker for his older brother's British Virgin Islands-based company. He was also vice president of SyriaTel, a Syrian telecommunications company owned by Rami. In May 2011, the **European Union** imposed sanctions on Ihab for providing funds to the regime that facilitated violence against protesters. The freeze on his assets was enough to prompt his resignation as vice chairman of the board of a large insurance company.

MAKHLUF, IYAD (1973–). Twin brother of **Ihab Makhluf** and maternal cousin of **Bashar al-Asad**. Iyad is a senior officer in the General Security Directorate. In May 2011, the **European Union** imposed sanctions on him for his involvement in violence against the civilian population.

MAKHLUF, RAMI (1969–). Maternal cousin of **Bashar al-Asad** and a leading businessman. Rami gained control of an extensive portion of the national **economy** during Bashar's term as president. His business empire included telecommunications, oil and gas companies, construction companies, **newspapers** and publishing companies, tobacco products, **banking**, real estate, department stores, and free trade zones along Syria's border with **Lebanon**. Along with his tycoon reputation, Rami was a symbol of **corruption**. His attempt to take over Syria's Mercedes concession in 2004, as well as his participation in the imprisonment of dissident **Riyad al-Sayf**, cemented his notoriety for most Syrians. In February 2008, the U.S. Department of the Treasury imposed sanctions on Rami for fostering corruption. In July of the same year, the George W. Bush administration went a step further, black-listing two of his companies so as to prevent him from doing business with American firms. At the outbreak of the **Syrian Uprising** in 2011, Rami emerged as a lightning rod for criticism. In May and June 2011, the **European Union** placed sanctions on several of his companies believed to be providing the Asad regime with funds to carry out violence against protesters. On 16 June, he announced his retirement from business to focus on charity work.

MALKI, ADNAN AL- (1918–1955). Deputy chief of staff of the Syrian Army. Colonel Malki's assassination on 22 April 1955, while he attended a soccer match, created a political firestorm. In December 1952, he had led an abortive coup against **Adib al-Shishakli** that resulted in his arrest. After Shishakli's downfall in February 1954, Malki was restored to his rank, and he rallied army support for neutralist politicians and opposition to Syria's adherence to the **Baghdad Pact**. By the time of his murder, he was one of the most powerful figures in the **armed forces** and, thus, in national politics. The assassin, who committed suicide right after shooting Malki, was a sergeant who belonged to the pro-Western **Syrian Social National Party (SSNP)**, which was seeking influence in the army, but the event was the occasion for a campaign of repression against the party, which was banned and whose members were purged from the army and bureaucracy. The leftist parties—the **Syrian Communist Party** and **Ba`th Party**—exploited Malki's martyrdom to boost their own popularity as upholders of Syrian independence from foreign domination. There followed trials of SSNP members and several men accused of plotting the assassination. In June, 140 SSNP members were

indicted for complicity in the crime and conspiring with the **United States** to install a pro-Western government. The trial lasted from August to December and resulted in harsh sentences for 26 SSNP members. In the larger political context, the Malki affair weakened conservatives and boosted the standing of leftists.

MA`LULA. The largest of three villages in modern Syria where a dialect of Aramaic is still spoken. Ma`lula is 60 kilometers southeast of **Damascus** at an elevation of 1,500 meters on a plateau at the southern end of the Anti-Lebanon range. It is famous for its ancient **Christian** holy places, including the monastery of St. Sergius, which dates from **Byzantine** times. Its current population of 2,000 is mostly **Greek Orthodox**. The younger generation is tending to use Arabic more in speech, although young people can understand their elders and speak Aramaic. The other two Aramaic-speaking villages are Bakh`a and Jabba`din.

MAMLUK. Arabic term for a military slave. The **Abbasids** were the first Muslim dynasty to use mamluks. They would purchase non-Muslim slaves (**Islamic** law [**shari`a**] prohibits the enslavement of Muslims) and train them for service to the ruler. In the second half of the 9th century, the Abbasid **caliphate** came to depend on mamluks to serve as palace guards. Muslim dynasties later perpetuated the practice. Mamluks constituted a crucial part of later **Ayyubid** armies, and they eventually seized power in **Egypt** and Syria in the middle of the 13th century. These slave soldiers established the **Mamluk sultanate**, which ruled Egypt, Syria, and much of Arabia until the **Ottoman** conquest of 1516–1517. The Ottomans eliminated the mamluks in Syria, but mamluk commanders and their cohorts remained an important element in Egypt throughout the first three centuries of Ottoman rule.

MAMLUK SULTANATE. A line of Turkish and **Circassian** sultans who ruled Syria from 1260 until 1516. The practice of relying on slave soldiers in Muslim societies went back to **Abbasid** times. The **Ayyubid** dynasty that ruled **Egypt** and Syria in the late 12th and early 13th centuries was just one of several Muslim powers to import, train, and depend on regiments of military slaves. In 1250, a band of these slaves seized power in Egypt and brought down the local Ayyubid line. The new regime would be based on the importation, training, and promotion to high office of military slaves from Central Asia and the Caucasus region.

The Mamluks initially entered Syria in 1260, in response to a **Mongol** invasion, and they were the first Muslim power to defeat the Mongols on the field at the **Battle of Ayn Jalut**. There followed five decades of intermittent Mongol–Mamluk warfare marked by Mamluk success in turning back Mon-

gol invasions in 1281, 1299–1303, and finally 1313. They also effected the complete and final eviction of the Latin **Crusader** kingdoms. In 1268, Mamluk troops captured Antioch; in 1291, Acre fell, followed by Tyre, Sidon, and Beirut. Meanwhile, the remaining Ayyubid potentates scattered in Syria were absorbed by the Mamluk sultanate.

The Mamluks were not Arab, but their victories over Mongol and **Christian** invaders earned them a degree of political legitimacy that they augmented with generous support for monumental urban construction and patronage of religious institutions, including **madrasas**. While Cairo remained the seat of the Mamluk sultanate, **Damascus** became a second capital from which Mamluk amirs ruled **Palestine** and coastal Syria. In fact, Damascus enjoyed a prolonged period of economic expansion and urban improvement during the 14th century. **Aleppo** was made the capital of northern Syria and also witnessed a long revival under Mamluk rule following its disastrous experiences under three Mongol occupations between 1260 and 1300. In these and other Syrian cities, the first century of Mamluk rule saw the construction and repair of dozens of mosques, schools, hospitals (**bimaristans**), and convents, as well as waterworks.

The prosperity and stability of Mamluk rule eroded during the last decade of the 14th century under the impact of civil wars among Mamluk factions contending for supremacy. These struggles left the Mamluks vulnerable to the Central Asian conqueror **Timur Leng**, who smashed Mamluk power in 1400 and wreaked havoc on Syrian cities. Sultan Barsbay (r. 1422–1438) restored order, but the last five decades of Mamluk rule (1468–1516) were marked by wars against **Turkomen** powers to the north, Christian piracy in the Mediterranean, growing **Bedouin** incursions on settled lands, and abuses of power by Mamluk amirs. Mamluk rule ended in October 1516, when the **Ottoman** sultan **Selim I** conquered Syria.

MARCH 8, 1963 COUP. In this turning point of modern Syrian history, a coalition of three groups of officers overthrew the civilian government of **Khalid al-Azm**. The conspirators included **Ba'th Party** officers in the **Military Committee**; Nasserist officers; and an independent group led by Major General **Ziyad al-Hariri**, whose brigade stationed in **Jabal Druze** marched on **Damascus** while other units seized the air force base outside Damascus. The new rulers then established a **National Revolutionary Command Council** of 20 members, including 12 Ba'thists and eight Nasserists and independents. The council declared a state of emergency that abolished the democratic liberties that the Azm government had reinstated only 10 weeks before. In the aftermath of the coup, a power struggle among the three groups of officers resulted in the triumph of the Military Committee by the beginning of August, thus inaugurating Ba'thist rule in Syria.

MARDAM, JAMIL (1894–1960). One of Syria's foremost political leaders during the **French Mandate** era. As a young man, Mardam was active in the **Arab nationalist** secret society **al-Fatat**. During the early years of the French Mandate, he joined the **People's Party** and later was a founding member of the **National Bloc**, in which he led the moderate faction seeking to cooperate with the **French**. In 1933, his leadership of the Bloc was challenged by the more Pan-Arab **Shukri al-Quwwatli**, who encouraged the growth of the **League of National Action** to strengthen his position in the Bloc, but Mardam held on to the leadership and served as prime minister of the National Bloc government of 1936–1939. That government's several failures, particularly its inability to secure ratification of the **Franco-Syrian Treaty** by French parliament or prevent **Turkey's** annexation of **Alexandretta**, severely damaged Mardam's standing in the Bloc. Moreover, his government encountered strong resistance in regions that the French had administered separately between 1922 and 1936: **Jabal Druze**, **Jabal Ansariyya**, and **Jazira**. Mardam suffered further blows when several prominent figures, including **Faris al-Khuri** and **Lutfi al-Haffar**, resigned from the Bloc's Executive Committee in 1938. He also faced opposition from **Abd al-Rahman Shahbandar**, who rallied those upset with the prime minister's handling of the Alexandretta issue and negotiations regarding the treaty. Mardam responded by censoring **newspapers** expressing Shahbandar's views and placing him under house arrest. The final blow to Mardam's government came in November 1938, when the French parliament voted against ratification of the treaty, but he did not resign until February 1939. Two months later, his longtime rival for leadership of the National Bloc, Quwwatli, ascended to the position of party chief. When Shahbandar was assassinated in June 1940, the investigation charged Mardam with plotting the crime, and he fled to **Iraq**, where he spent the next two years.

When Mardam returned to Syria, the country was preparing for national elections scheduled for July 1943. Mardam and Quwwatli patched up their differences to strengthen the National Bloc's electoral prospects. After the Bloc swept the polls, **Sa'dallah al-Jabiri** formed a cabinet, with Mardam as foreign minister. When the Jabiri government fell in December 1946, President Quwwatli invited Mardam to head a cabinet. After the elections of 1947 returned the **National Party** to power, Mardam formed a new cabinet, which plunged the country into the **Palestine War of 1948**. Syrian public opinion held the government responsible for the army's poor showing against **Israel**, and rumors spread that Mardam had embezzled funds collected for the war. He tried to restore public confidence by forming a new cabinet in August 1948, but few were convinced that it represented real change and the country slipped into three months of turmoil and political violence. The crisis subsided when Mardam submitted his resignation on 1 December, spelling the end of his long run as one of Syria's leading politicians.

MARJ DABIQ. This small town on northern Syria's **Quwayq River** was the site of the decisive battle fought in August 1516, when **Ottoman** sultan **Selim I** defeated **Mamluk** forces. That victory opened the way for Syria's incorporation into the Ottoman Empire.

MASHARQA, ZUHAYR AL- (1938–2007). A prominent member of the **Hafiz al-Asad** regime during the 1980s. Masharqa was from **Aleppo** and had a professional background in law. Unlike most other high-ranking officials in Asad's circle, he had a brief spell in the private **industrial** sector as manager of a manufacturing concern. In the 1970s, he was governor of **Hama**, and then minister of **education** and deputy secretary-general of the **Ba'th Party**. He became one of three vice presidents in 1984, after the political crisis in the wake of Hafiz al-Asad's serious illness in the fall of 1983. Masharqa was vice president for education and cultural affairs alongside the other two vice presidents, **Abd al-Halim al-Khaddam** and **Rif'at al-Asad**. He remained a vice president under **Bashar al-Asad** until stepping down in 2006.

MASYAF. A small town in the **Jabal Ansariyya** between **Hama** and **Baniyas**. It emerged as a strategic stronghold during the First **Crusade** in the conflict among Franks, **Sunni** Muslim strongmen, and **Isma'ilis**. For a time, Masyaf (also called Masyad) was the seat of the **Nizari** leaders, including the renowned Rashid al-Din Sinan. The citadel, which is still standing, withstood a siege by **Saladin** in 1176. Masyaf remained a Nizari bastion until its subjugation by the **Mamluk** sultan **Baybars** in 1270. Today, this village attracts **tourists** to wander through its Crusader-era ruins, especially the fortress, referred to as the "Castle of the Assassins."

MAYSALUN, BATTLE OF. On 24 July 1920, **French** troops defeated Arab forces defending **Amir Faysal's** kingdom and snuffed out hopes for Syrian independence. The battle marked the end of the diplomatic maneuvering between Faysal and France that had begun soon after the end of **World War I**. While France sought to impose its authority over Syria, Faysal strove to preserve some independence for the government he had constructed since October 1918. In June 1920, the French government decided to eliminate Faysal's regime and gave orders to General Henri Gouraud, who commanded French troops in **Lebanon**, to occupy **Damascus** as soon as possible. On 14 July, Gouraud issued an ultimatum to Faysal demanding that he accept the **French Mandate**, halt conscription, limit the size of the Syrian Army, use **currency** issued by France, and allow French forces to occupy stations along the **railway** line that ran from northern Lebanon through **Homs** and **Hama** to **Aleppo**. Faysal had four days to accept these terms or Gouraud would in-

vade. The amir sought clarifications and an extension of the deadline, which Gouraud granted. He gave Faysal until 20 July to accept the terms and begin implementing them.

Meanwhile, nationalists in the **Syrian Congress** rejected the ultimatum and called for popular mobilization to resist a French occupation. Faysal in turn dissolved the congress and wired his acceptance of Gouraud's latest demands on 19 July, but his surrender did not reach Gouraud because the telegraph wires had been cut. Consequently, a French force of 12,000 crossed the Lebanese–Syrian frontier, and Syrian forces withdrew to Khan Maysalun, just 25 kilometers west of Damascus. On the morning of 24 July, Syrian troops and volunteers clashed with French forces. The Syrians had enough ammunition to fight for only a few hours, while the French had air power and a handful of tanks, in addition to plenty of ammunition. The battle commenced at dawn and was over by 10 a.m. France's decisive victory at Maysalun paved the way for its occupation of Syria and Faysal's flight from the country.

MELKITE. *See* GREEK CATHOLIC; GREEK ORTHODOX.

MIDHAT PASHA (1822–1884). Famous **Ottoman** reformer who served as governor of **Damascus** from 1878 to 1879. Midhat first came to Syria in 1840, when he was posted as a low-level clerk in Damascus for two years, and he returned in 1851 as inspector of the province's finances. He later served as provincial governor in Baghdad and Bulgaria. In both posts, he created gendarmeries to bring greater security, ordered the construction of roads and bridges, and opened schools. He played a key role in the tumultuous events of late 1876, when Istanbul saw the deposition of two sultans and the accession of Sultan **Abdulhamid II** in September in exchange for his promise to grant a **constitution** for the Ottoman Empire. The new sultan made Midhat the grand vizier, the head of the empire's vast bureaucracy, but two months later, Abdulhamid dismissed him and removed him and other high officials associated with the constitutional movement from Istanbul by assigning them to provincial posts.

Midhat arrived in Damascus for the third time at the end of 1878, now as governor of the province. He concentrated on developing a better communications and **transportation** network, extending new telegraph lines, building post offices, and encouraging the construction of carriage roads to link the major towns. A road running from Damascus to **Homs**, Tripoli, and **Latakia** enabled the Ottomans to gain firmer control of **Jabal Ansariyya** and its historically autonomous **Alawi** inhabitants. Midhat also gave a boost to **education**, as 30 schools opened during his brief tenure. In Damascus, he urged **Tahir al-Jaza'iri** to form a benevolent society to pursue educational re-

forms, and he appointed Jaza'iri superintendent of schools in the province. He also encouraged Jaza'iri's project to found Syria's first public library. The reformist governor's other achievements included improving the provincial gendarmerie and reforming tax collection. In spite of these efforts, the sultan suspected that Midhat was plotting to carve out an autonomous realm, and, in August 1880, Abdulhamid ordered his transfer to a **Turkish** province, where the sultan's spies could keep a closer eye on him. The sultan later trumped up charges that Midhat had conspired to murder Sultan Abdulaziz in 1876. Midhat was tried, convicted, and imprisoned in the Arabian town of Ta'if, where the sultan's agents murdered him in prison in 1884.

MILITARY COMMITTEE. This secret faction of the **Ba'th Party** was founded in Cairo by five Syrian officers during the **United Arab Republic (UAR)** era. The original members included three **Alawi** officers—**Salah al-Jadid**, **Hafiz al-Asad**, Muhammad al-Umran—and two **Isma'ili** officers—Abd al-Karim al-Jundi and Ahmad al-Mir. These men despised party founders **Michel Aflaq** and **Salah al-Din al-Bitar** for their “betrayal” of the party when they dissolved it at Gamal Abd al-Nasser's insistence as a condition of forming the UAR in 1958. Military Committee members wanted to rebuild the party and preserve the union with **Egypt**. When they returned to Syria after its secession from the UAR, they contacted other officers, mostly **Alawis**, **Druzes**, and provincial **Sunnis**, with whom they conspired to overthrow the government.

Because the members of the Military Committee were dismissed from the **armed forces** upon their return to Syria, they developed ties with Nasserist officers and the few remaining Ba'thist officers to plot a coup d'état. The first attempt was a mutiny by Nasserist and Ba'thist officers at **Aleppo** on 2 April 1962, but this venture failed. The Military Committee then contacted Major General **Ziyad al-Hariri**, who was not aligned with any of the factions but was apprehensive about Prime Minister **Khalid al-Azm's** desire to restore full civilian authority over the army. The combination of Hariri, Nasserists, and Ba'thists brought about the **March 8, 1963 Coup**. The Military Committee then augmented its membership so that it grew to include 10 officers, including men placed on the **National Revolutionary Command Council**.

The Military Committee maintained its cohesion in the first Ba'thist regime as it contended with Nasserists and the party's old guard for power, but tensions emerged when Umran called for more moderate economic and political measures to conciliate opposition to the regime. At the end of 1964, he was ousted from power and sent to Spain as the ambassador. The Military Committee won a trial of strength with the party old guard and seized power in the **February 23, 1966 Coup**. Following the **June 1967 War**, tensions within the committee resurfaced between those who supported Jadid's ag-

gressive policy toward **Israel** and economic radicalism at home and the supporters of Asad's call for restraint toward Israel and moderation in attacks on the Syrian bourgeoisie. By 1970, of the five original members, Asad and Jadid were on the verge of a decisive showdown, Umran was still in Spain, Mir was in exile in Beirut, and Jundi was dead. When Jadid forced the issue in the fall, Asad seized power in what he called the **Corrective Movement** and arrested Jadid, bringing about the final end of the Military Committee.

MINING. After **petroleum**, Syria's chief mineral resource is phosphate rock. Syria contributes 2 percent of world output, which makes it the ninth leading producer. Mining of deposits near **Palmyra** began in 1971. During the 1980s, annual production ranged from 1.2 to 2 million tons, and it then increased in the next decade to an average of 2.5 million tons. Syria usually exports 60 percent of production and processes the remainder to make ammonia urea and fertilizers. Other mineral resources, including salt near **Dayr al-Zur** and asphalt near **Latakia**, are of minor economic significance. Local minerals useful for construction include cement, marble, and gypsum.

President **Bashar al-Asad's economic reforms** included the mining sector. The General Establishment of Geology and Mineral Resources worked to enhance phosphate production. It built phosphate-based fertilizer plants and washing and drying units for phosphate; it also upgraded asphalt mining capabilities and marble plants. In 2009, the General Establishment assisted in developing bentonite and zeolite mining.

MINORITIES. Analysts commonly break down Syria's population using two categories, **religion** and **language**. In religious terms, the majority of the population is **Sunni** Muslim, and the country contains non-Sunni Muslims, **Christians**, and, until recent years, **Jews**. In linguistic terms, Arabic speakers comprise the majority, and there are Syrians for whom **Kurdish**, **Armenian**, **Circassian**, **Turkish**, and **Assyrian** are the mother tongue. Before modern times, the different groups coexisted with little difficulty, but that changed with the emergence of nationalism because of its tendency to impose ethnic and cultural homogeneity.

The first glimmers of modern communal tensions appeared in 19th-century attacks on Christians by Muslim crowds at **Aleppo** and **Damascus**. **Ottoman** measures held such tensions in check after 1860, but the **French Mandate** authorities deliberately exploited minorities as military and political assets to weaken and divide the country's primarily Sunni **Arab nationalist** movement. For instance, the **French** created military units comprised of Armenians, Kurds, and Circassians. They also devised administrative boundaries that accentuated minority aspirations for political autonomy in heavily **Druze** and **Alawi** regions.

Collaboration by members of minorities with the French colored the outlook of Syria's mostly Sunni Arab leadership after independence, hence the common view that minorities are a danger to national integrity. Consequently, a succession of regimes emphasized the country's Arab character at the expense of linguistic minorities by making Arabic the only language of instruction in public schools and restricting other languages to private schools. The harshest measures against a language group targeted Kurds living along the border with Turkey. In the early 1960s, the government implemented a plan to dilute concentrations of Kurds by denying villagers the sort of assistance for **agriculture** provided to Arab citizens and colonizing the area with Arabs. On the other hand, apprehensions about religious tensions have led to efforts to foster a secular public culture and guarantee the religious rights of non-Sunni citizens. Official policies, then, have obstructed Kurds and Armenians from sustaining a lively culture in their languages; at the same time, religious minorities enjoy an atmosphere of toleration that is preferable to the situation in neighboring countries. The clear exception to this pattern is the Jewish community, which, because of the animosity toward **Israel**, faced severe restrictions until the mid-1990s, when most Jews left the country.

The future of minorities in Syria might depend on the outcome of the **Syrian Uprising**. In its early months, the government eased restrictions on the ability of Kurds to own property and granted stateless Kurds nationality. The secular nature of the Asad regime and the security of religious minorities, in particular, made them hesitant to support the opposition. Minority groups, for example, Christians, have taken lessons from other countries in the region, including **Iraq** and **Egypt**, where sectarian violence surfaced after a change in regime. Minority groups are also worried about the prospect of reprisal killings should the Asad regime lose power. While opposition groups have tried to assure religious minorities that there is a place for them in a post-Asad future, violence and civil strife have assumed sectarian tones, with Christian and Alawi **families** being kidnapped and killed.

MIRDASID DYNASTY. Tribal rulers of **Aleppo** and northern Syria from 1023 to 1079. They came from the Banu Kilab tribe that had supported the **Hamdanid dynasty** during the late 10th century. After the fall of the Hamdanids in 1016, Salih ibn Mirdas led the Banu Kilab in their contest for power against the **Byzantines** and **Fatimids**. The Mirdasids survived as rulers of a buffer region between Byzantine and Fatimid forces and by balancing the interests of Aleppan townsmen with those of the Banu Kilab tribesmen. Throughout their five decades of ascendance, the Mirdasids fended off several attempts by the Fatimids to absorb Aleppo into their empire. This ephemeral dynasty fell in 1079 to an Arab vassal of the **Saljuk** Turkish sultans.

MIRU, MUHAMMAD MUSTAFA (1941–). Designated prime minister in a March 2000 cabinet reshuffle just a few months before **Hafiz al-Asad's** death. A native of a small village north of **Damascus**, Miru's first public role, in 1971, was in the teachers union. He then held administrative positions in provincial governorates before making his mark as a capable technocrat as governor of **Aleppo** from 1993 to 2000. It is reported that he owed his elevation to the prime minister's post to **Bashar al-Asad's** familiarity with his abilities and reputation for honesty in contrast to the air of **corruption** surrounding Miru's predecessor, **Mahmud al-Zu'bi**. In September 2003, Prime Minister Miru resigned from office and was succeeded by **Muham-mad Naji al-Utri**.

MONGOLS. Central Asian conquerors of the eastern half of the Muslim world. The Mongols first raided Muslim lands in 1218, when they conquered a Central Asian sultanate. Forty years later, they sacked Baghdad and destroyed the **Abbasid caliphate**. They were then poised for further conquests in Syria and **Egypt**. Mongol forces overran **Aleppo** and **Hama** before a **Mamluk** army defeated them on 3 September 1260, at the **Battle of Ayn Jalut** (the Spring of Goliath) in **Palestine**, and then drove the Mongols from Syria. There followed several decades of frontier warfare between the Mamluks and the Mongol Ilkhanid dynasty, based in northwestern **Iran**. In 1280 and 1299, the Mongols invaded Syria. On the first occasion, the Mamluks defeated them near **Homs**. The second invasion, however, led to the occupation of **Damascus**, the destruction of much of the city, and a slaughter of its inhabitants. The Mongols then reached Gaza in southern Palestine before a Mamluk counteroffensive drove the invaders out of Syria for the last time in 1303.

MOUNT HERMON. In Arabic, *Jabal al-Shaykh*. This massive peak on the Syrian-**Lebanese** border is the highest point in the **Golan Heights** at 2,814 meters. It has been under **Israeli** control since the **June 1967 War**. Its location and elevation make its possession a strategic asset for whoever controls it. Consequently, Mount Hermon was the scene of fierce combat during the **October 1973 War**, when the Syrians seized it and then Israeli forces recaptured it. During the **Syrian-Israeli peace talks** of the 1990s, Israel expressed the desire to maintain an early warning listening post there in the event of its return to Syria, but **Damascus** rejected that condition. In addition to its commanding prospect over surrounding areas, the **water** run-off from Mount Hermon's snowmelt feeds tributaries to the Jordan River and thereby contributes to Israel's water supply.

MOUNT QASIYUN. **Damascus** lies at the foot of the massive, towering Mount Qasiyun, a spur of the Anti-Lebanon range. In local lore, the 1,200-meter peak has religious significance as the site of several grottoes, including the one where Cain is supposed to have slain Abel. Another one is associated with the Qur'anic tale of the People of the Cave (Sura 18), and another is where 40 prophets are supposed to have died of starvation. During the medieval and early modern eras, a handful of suburbs spread up the lower slopes as extensions of Damascus. In recent years, its higher slopes have become dotted with restaurants and **coffeehouses** that Damascenes frequent on summer evenings to escape the heat and enjoy the sweeping vista of city lights spread out on the plain below.

MU'ALLIM, WALID AL- (1941–). A high-ranking Syrian diplomat who has held several prominent positions in government. Mu'allim worked in embassies in Tanzania, **Saudi Arabia**, Spain, and **Great Britain** before being selected as the Syrian ambassador to Romania in 1975 and the **United States** in 1990. In 2006, he was appointed minister of foreign affairs. He has participated in negotiations with **Israel**, **Iran**, North Korea, **Turkey**, and the United States, among other nations. Mu'allim is particularly skilled in Syrian–Israeli peace negotiations, having partaken in numerous conferences throughout his years in office. He is also an influential overseer of Syrian affairs in **Lebanon** and the United States. During the **Syrian Uprising**, he has been a central spokesperson for **Bashar al-Asad's** government. Mu'allim was partially responsible for explaining **Damascus's** reaction to antigovernment demonstrations. The minister delivered several controversial statements regarding Western sanctions against Syria and accused the United States of repeatedly meddling in its internal affairs. President Barack Obama imposed sanctions against the minister for supporting the government's military crackdown against protesters.

MU'AWIYA (c. 600–680). The first **Umayyad** caliph (r. 661–680) and founder of that dynasty. Mu'awiya is renowned in Arab history for his deft political touch, which enabled him to provide two decades of political calm following the stormy contest to succeed the third Muslim caliph, Uthman. Mu'awiya's political tact is embodied in the aphorism attributed to him: “I apply not my lash where my tongue suffices, nor my sword where my whip is enough. And if there be one hair binding me to my fellow men, I let it not break. If they pull I loosen, and if they loosen I pull.” The so-called “hair of Mu'awiya” became a proverbial expression for tact and diplomacy. Yet, **Shi'i** Muslims revile Mu'awiya for what they consider his usurpation of **Ali ibn Abi Talib's** rightful claim to the **caliphate**.

In 639, the second Rightly Guided Caliph, Umar, appointed Mu'awiya governor of Syria. He secured the loyalty of both immigrant Arabian tribes and Arab tribes that had long resided in Syria. Furthermore, he continued the early Muslim practice of relying on administrators, mostly **Christian** Arabs, who had served the **Byzantines**. Mu'awiya's favorite wife was a Christian, as were his court poet and physician. His lenience toward Syrian Arab Christians gained him broad political support in a land where the vast majority of the population adhered to the same religion as the Muslims' chief enemy, the Byzantines, who had only recently been displaced as rulers of Syria. Mu'awiya was governor of a frontier province, and like later Muslim rulers, he used northern Syria as the springboard for military campaigns against Byzantine forces in Asia Minor. He also ordered the construction of the first Arab Muslim naval fleet, which he sent against Cyprus, Rhodes, and Sicily. In 655, Mu'awiya ordered his navy to conduct the first of many Muslim assaults on Constantinople.

When his kinsman, the caliph Uthman, was murdered in 656, Mu'awiya refused to recognize Ali's claim to the caliphate. They marshaled their forces for a battle at Siffin on the **Euphrates River** in 657, but after some fighting, the two sides agreed to submit their dispute to arbitration. Mu'awiya had still refused to acknowledge Ali as the caliph when the latter was assassinated in 661, whereupon Mu'awiya became the uncontested claimant to the caliphate, the seat of which he moved from Medina in Arabia to **Damascus**.

The heartlands of the Arab Empire in Syria, **Iraq**, Arabia, and **Egypt** were stable and prosperous under Mu'awiya, and he devoted much of his energy to military campaigns of conquest. In 668, he dispatched an Arab army under the command of his son Yazid to seize Constantinople, but the Byzantines withstood a siege of several months. Mu'awiya tried again with a longer siege that lasted from 674 to 680, but in the end, the Byzantines forced a retreat. On a different front, in 663, he sent an army from Egypt into Byzantine-ruled North Africa, thereby reviving the enterprise of Arab conquest that had been suspended during the turmoil following Uthman's assassination. By the time of Mu'awiya's death in 680, Arab armies had reached the borders of Algeria. On the eastern front, the caliph appointed Ziyad, a former supporter of Ali, to govern Iraq and **Iran**. Ziyad consolidated Arab rule of eastern Iran and extended the empire into Afghanistan. In 674, Ziyad's son struck out north of Afghanistan to conquer the Buddhist towns of Bukhara and Samarkand. Shortly before his death, Mu'awiya designated his son Yazid as his successor, thereby breaking with 50 years of Muslim practice that had not set a precedent for dynastic succession.

MUGHNIYA, IMAD AL- (1962–2008). A major figure in **Hizballah's** inner circle responsible for organizing **terrorist** operations worldwide. Having trained with the **Palestinian** Fatah militia during the **Lebanese Civil**

War, Mughniya ascended through the ranks of Hizballah as a key figure in military and political operations. On 12 February 2008, he was assassinated by a car bomb in a tightly controlled area of **Damascus**. Syrian officials blamed **Israeli** intelligence officers for his murder.

MUHAMMAD ALI (c. 1768–1849). Powerful ruler of **Egypt** (r. 1805–1848). Muhammad Ali successfully challenged **Ottoman** authority by carving out a virtually autonomous realm over the Nile Valley. He took advantage of Ottoman weakness when he had his son, **Ibrahim Pasha**, lead an army into Syria in 1831. As governor of Syria, Ibrahim instituted the same measures of state monopoly over valuable resources, efficient taxation, conscription, and disarmament of the informal militias that had solidified Muhammad Ali's position in Egypt. These centralizing measures foreshadowed the **Tanzimat** reforms to come in the following decade and encountered stiff resistance in various parts of Syria. In 1840, European opposition to Muhammad Ali's growing power forced him to abandon Syria in return for recognition of his descendants' hereditary rights to govern Egypt under Ottoman suzerainty.

MUKHABARAT. The Arabic term for a variety of domestic and foreign intelligence agencies responsible for the regime's basic political security. *See also* SECURITY FORCES.

MURSHID, SULAYMAN AL- (1905–1946). Charismatic leader of an **Alawi** revivalist movement in the early years of the **French Mandate**. Murshid was born Sulayman Yunus in a small village in **Jabal Ansariyya**. In 1922, he claimed to receive religious inspiration and attracted a following among the region's peasants. He then incited them to withhold taxes and defy the authorities, so the **French** arrested him in 1923. Upon his release, Murshid claimed the power to work miracles, and his following grew. At that point, the French decided to develop friendly relations with him and turned him into an ally. Murshid became a prominent leader in Jabal Ansariyya, accumulating a large amount of land and marrying into influential Alawi families. In 1936, he was elected to the Syrian parliament, where he sought to preserve Alawi interests within a unified Syria. After independence in 1946, Murshid led a revolt. The government sent troops to **Latakia** province, captured him, and publicly executed him in **Damascus**.

MUSIC. If music can be likened to language, then Syria's musical tradition is comprised of dialects linked to the country's various religious groups and social milieus. **Christian** liturgical chants; **Jewish** songs; **Sufi** music; and Arab musical traditions associated with **Bedouin**, village, and city life give

the country a rich and complex musical heritage. The tradition of Arab music in Syria goes back to the **Umayyad dynasty**, when rulers held musical performances by singers, who performed a variety of Arabian, **Byzantine**, and Persian styles. In later centuries, music became an important part of the rituals of Sufi orders, frequently to the accompaniment of a reed flute. The **Ottomans** influenced music in such provinces as Syria with the formation of military bands, and the authorities regulated musicians and singers through specialized guilds. In the desert, Bedouins enjoyed their own musical tradition, in which the musician played a one-string fiddle to accompany a singer. Villages commonly played music to celebrate weddings and express grief in funeral lamentations.

During the late 19th century, increased interaction with Europe brought familiarity with Western instrumentation and musical forms that fostered the development of Arab orchestral backing for singers, first in Cairo and then in other Arab cities. Since the 1960s, popular Western music has had a following among the young, and artists have created original syntheses of Arab melodies and rhythms with such Western genres as disco and rap.

MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD. The most important **Islamic fundamentalist** movement of the 20th century. The Society of Muslim Brothers was founded in **Egypt**, in 1928, by a schoolteacher named Hasan al-Banna. A Syrian branch of this organization devoted to reviving **Islam** formed in 1946, when several Islamic reform societies merged under the leadership of **Mustafa al-Siba'i**. In the 1920s and 1930s, there appeared Muslim benevolent societies aiming to revive Islam and oppose Western cultural influences (**cinemas**, immodest **women's** dress, mixing of genders in public). The direct ancestor of the Muslim Brotherhood was an Aleppan society called Dar al-Arqam, founded in 1935. From independence until 1958, the Muslim Brotherhood participated in elections and acquired a substantial following in **Damascus** but failed to attract much support in other parts of the country. In January 1952, the military ruler **Adib al-Shishakli** dissolved the organization, but it reemerged after his overthrow in 1954 in a diminished capacity. The government again banned the society during the **United Arab Republic** (1958–1961), and it has opposed each of the three regimes to rule in the name of the **Ba'th Party**. The society's leadership remained in the hands of Siba'i until poor **health** forced him to step down in 1957. **Isam al-Attar** then led the movement for the next 12 years.

In April 1964, the Muslim Brotherhood instigated antigovernment demonstrations in **Hama** regarding the Ba'th's secularism and socialist economic policies. The regime's violent suppression of this and later protests created a dilemma for the group. Should they adopt armed struggle to overthrow the regime or pursue a nonviolent course in seeking to influence it? Attar favored the latter course, but, in 1969, militant sections of the society ousted him.

There emerged a new collective leadership, chief among whom was a teacher from Hama, Adnan Sa'd al-Din. This event marked the Muslim Brotherhood's turn to violent tactics, first in opposing the Ba`thist government, and then in trying to overthrow it. Moreover, the Muslim Brotherhood's propaganda began to emphasize the regime's **Alawi** complexion and accused it of seeking to destroy **Sunni** Islam.

In the late 1970s, the Muslim Brotherhood carried out assassinations against members and supporters of the regime. Perhaps inspired by the Iranian Revolution, in 1980, the Muslim Brotherhood formed a coalition of Islamic groups called the Islamic Front in Syria. The front's manifesto called upon Syrians who opposed Asad's regime to join forces in a struggle for the restoration of civil and political freedoms, the independence of the judiciary, and private property rights. Meanwhile, an assortment of secular leftist groups and professional syndicates were organizing protests and demonstrations against the regime, an indication that it was not only religious circles that opposed government policies and practices. The country's urban centers, particularly in the northern towns of **Homs**, Hama, and **Aleppo**, witnessed a vicious struggle between the government and the Islamist rebels. In June 1979, for instance, Muslim Brotherhood gunmen massacred more than 50 Alawi cadets at an Aleppan artillery school. After an assassination attempt against President **Hafiz al-Asad** in June 1980, the government made association with the Muslim Brotherhood a capital crime. The culmination of this virtual civil war took place in February 1982, when Islamist forces briefly took over Hama. In the course of two weeks of fighting, government forces retook the city, leveled huge stretches of urban landscape, and killed several thousand insurgents and civilians.

The Islamic Front split after suffering huge losses in Hama. Some members lost all confidence in armed struggle, while others sought to broaden their political base by allying with secular parties opposed to the Ba`thist government. In 1986, Asad offered amnesty to Muslim Brothers in exile if they pledged to refrain from political activities. The acceptance of this deal by a number of former leaders dealt another blow to the organization. By the early 1990s, the Muslim Brotherhood and Islamic fundamentalism were more generally quiescent, if not moribund.

When **Bashar al-Asad** became president, he pardoned and released scores of political prisoners, including about 400 Muslim Brothers in November 2000. Under the leadership of **Ali al-Bayanuni**, who was living in exile, the Muslim Brotherhood exhibited ideological and tactical flexibility. In 2006, Bayanuni emphasized the organization's rejection of armed struggle to achieve its goal, which he defined not as an Islamic Republic, but a democratic state. He also indicated that the Muslim Brotherhood was willing to share power with other groups in opposition to the Asad regime. While these remarks expressed shifts in position, Bayanuni's comments were not enough

to assuage the concerns of **minority** groups that the Muslim Brotherhood's long-term aim was to set up an Islamic Republic. For a time, the Muslim Brotherhood partnered with **Abd al-Halim al-Khaddam**, a former vice president and foreign minister, to form the National Salvation Front, which sought to overthrow Asad's government. At the same time, the Muslim Brotherhood kept the door open to reconciliation, provided that the regime permit political exiles to return and release political prisoners. In 2009, the Muslim Brotherhood pulled out of the National Salvation Front.

In 2010, Mohammad Riyad al-Shaqfa replaced Bayanuni as secretary-general of the Muslim Brotherhood. When the **Syrian Uprising** broke out in March 2011, the organization emerged as a key player in exile politics. It attempted to downplay its influence in the **Syrian National Council (SNC)** to ease the concerns of secular and nationalist factions in the opposition, but it was said to be in charge of the SNC's divisions for military operations and humanitarian aid. It reiterated that it supported a multiparty democracy and that a new **constitution** will have to represent all Syrians. Such statements suggest that the group's leadership understands the need to make the organization's policies more acceptable to Western powers opposed to the Asad regime.

MUTANABBI, ABU AL-TAYYIB AL- (915–965). One of the great classical Arab poets, especially as a master panegyrist. Mutanabbi was born in the **Iraqi** city of Kufa and spent much of his adult life in Syria. Some accounts of his life hold that in his early years he claimed prophetic powers, hence the sobriquet "al-Mutanabbi," he who claims to be a prophet; that he led a political-religious revolt in central Syria, for which he was imprisoned in **Homs** for two years; or that he was a partisan of the **Qarmati Shi'i** movement. It is more certain that like other poets of his age, Mutanabbi drifted from one court to another, celebrating his patrons' achievements in panegyric verse. He gained renown in **Aleppo** as court poet of the **Hamdanid** ruler Sayf al-Dawla from 948 until 957. During that time, Mutanabbi wrote long odes and panegyrics praising his master's military campaigns against the **Byzantines** and Arab tribes. The poet, however, fell out of Sayf al-Dawla's favor, probably because of his rivals' plotting against him, and for the next several years, he moved from court to court between Cairo and **Iran**, until he was finally killed in a **Bedouin** attack on a caravan.

Critics have observed that Mutanabbi's poetry is distinctive for its Arab chauvinism, religious skepticism, and pessimism. His style shifted from a neoclassical manner to spontaneous and personal moods until his mature poems showed a synthesis of the neoclassical with a freer style.

N

NAHLAWI, ABD AL-KARIM AL- (1926–). Military officer. Lieutenant Colonel Nahlawi led the September 1961 coup to bring about Syria's secession from the **United Arab Republic (UAR)**. He and his army colleagues designated a civilian government to be headed by the conservative **Ma'mun al-Kuzbari** and then stepped out of the political limelight while seeking to maintain supervision of the government, in particular blocking any moves to relax the strict controls of political life imposed by the UAR. On 28 March 1962, Nahlawi organized a coup against a conservative government that was repealing the **Socialist Decrees** and criticizing officers for meddling in politics. He ordered the arrest of President **Nazim al-Qudsi** and Prime Minister **Ma'ruf al-Dawalibi**, as well as other cabinet members and several parliamentary deputies. Then officers opposed to Nahlawi rose up in **Homs** and **Aleppo**. The affair ended with the decision at a meeting of officers held at Homs to exile Nahlawi and six others to Switzerland. In January 1963, Nahlawi and other exiled officers crossed the **Turkish** border back into Syria and incited junior officers to demand the restoration of union with **Egypt**. He again failed to gain support from many other officers and went back into exile.

NA'ISA, AKTHAM AL- (c. 1953–). Veteran **human rights** advocate. Na'isa was the leading attorney for several reform initiatives, and he fought to lift oppressive **censorship** laws. In 1989, he founded the Committee for the Defense of Democratic Liberties and Human Rights. His newsletter, *Voice of Democracy*, landed him in prison for two years. In 2000, Na'isa was among more than 100 Syrian intellectuals and advocates to petition for the removal of the country's **Emergency Law**. While he welcomed new reform initiatives implemented during President **Bashar al-Asad's** first year in office, his continued calls for greater freedoms made him an easy target in the crackdown that followed the **Damascus Spring**. After spending a short time in prison, he was released in November 2001, as part of a presidential amnesty commemorating the 31st anniversary of **Hafiz al-Asad's** ascent to power. In 2004, Na'isa was arrested again for publishing a report documenting the

government's repression of **Kurds** in the aftermath of riots in **al-Qamishli**. Upon his release, he was denied medical care as punishment for criticizing the president and questioning government policies.

NASRALLAH, HASAN (1960–). Senior political leader of **Hizballah** since 1992. Nasrallah studied theology at several **Shi'i** centers in **Iran** and **Iraq** before joining Hizballah as a military commander. Under his leadership, the group adopted a more aggressive posture. He was the first official in the organization to acknowledge its weapons stockpiles. Nasrallah was identified as a possible suspect in the 2005 assassination of former Lebanese prime minister **Rafiq al-Hariri**, although he denied any connection. In the wake of the **Lebanese War of 2006**, he emerged as a popular figure among Arabs opposed to domination by the **United States** and **Israel**. His staunch support for **Bashar al-Asad's** regime in the face of the **Syrian Uprising** cost him his standing as an Arab leader and cast him in the part of a Shi'i sectarian figure.

NATIONAL BLOC. The major nationalist party of the **French Mandate** era, it was first conceived at a conference of political leaders in Beirut in October 1927. The National Bloc was formally established at the **Homs Congress** of November 1932. While its leadership was officially committed to the unity and independence of Syria, its short-term goal was to obtain a share in governing the country, a constitutional parliamentary form of government, and a treaty with **France**. The Bloc was the most broadly representative nationalist movement of the interwar period, with leaders from each of the major cities, including **Damascus**, **Aleppo**, **Homs**, and **Hama**. The Bloc represented a more moderate approach to achieving national aspirations than had the **Iron Hand Society** or the **People's Party**, an approach dictated by France's success in totally suppressing the **Great Revolt** in 1927.

Although it won just 22 of 70 seats to the Constituent Assembly in the 1928 elections, the Bloc's confident, articulate representatives managed to dominate the assembly's proceedings, and its committee to draft a **constitution**. Because this document contained articles the French found unacceptable, High Commissioner Henri Ponsot adjourned the assembly. In 1930, France promulgated a constitution, and even though it fell short of the Bloc's demands, its leaders decided to participate in national parliamentary elections in 1931–1932. This willingness to compromise reflected the attitude of **Jamil Mardam**, who headed the National Bloc government that came to power in 1936, seeking to secure French ratification of the **Franco-Syrian Treaty**. This was the first nationalist government since **Amir Faysal's** fall 16 years earlier. During its three-year tenure, the nationalist government suffered a number of severe political failures: the loss of **Alexandretta** to

Turkey; the refusal of the French parliament to ratify the treaty; and resistance to nationalist rule by areas heavily populated by non-Sunnis, including **Jabal Druze**, **Jabal Ansariyya**, and **Jazira**. The government's failure led to Mardam's fall from party leadership and the ascent of his rival, **Shukri al-Quwwatli**. In 1943, Quwwatli dissolved the Bloc and formed its successor, the **National Party**, to contest national elections.

NATIONAL PARTY. Created on the eve of independent Syria's first national elections in July 1943, as the successor to the **National Bloc**, the National Party, headed by **Shukri al-Quwwatli**, led the final push for complete, unfettered independence. The party swept the July 1943 elections and brought to power a cabinet headed by **Sa'dallah al-Jabiri** as prime minister; parliament then elected Quwwatli president. Lacking an ideological program or organizational framework, the National Party resembled the Bloc in representing the personal influence of prominent men. Nonetheless, it stayed in power during Syria's difficult transition to liberation from **French** domination, enduring France's May 1945 bombardment of **Damascus** and overseeing the final evacuation of French troops in April 1946. The National Party won national elections for a second time in July 1947, but the party's days as a powerful force were numbered. It had the misfortune of holding office during the **Palestine War of 1948**, in which the armies of several Arab countries proved unable to prevent the establishment of a Jewish state, **Israel**, in what had recently been an Arab land. **Husni al-Za'im's** coup in March 1949 ended nearly six years of National Party domination, and the colonel forced its leaders to leave the country.

During the next five years of military domination, the party moved into the opposition, while its rival, the **People's Party**, occasionally gained the confidence of military strongmen. The National Party orchestrated strikes and demonstrations in September 1950, to protest an attempt by the Constituent Assembly, dominated by the People's Party, to convert itself into a four-year parliament. When democracy returned after the **Adib al-Shishakli** dictatorship, the National Party was far weaker. Yet, in 1954, its new leader, **Sabri al-Asali**, formed a coalition government with the People's Party. But both parties, representing the political elite inherited from **Ottoman** times, spent the next four years feuding with one another and fending off the rising leftist current represented by the **Ba'th Party** and the **Syrian Communist Party**. The National Party practically self-destructed when it divided into factions for and against union with **Iraq**. By the time Syria entered the **United Arab Republic** with **Egypt** in 1958, the National Party was a shadow of the organization that had guided the country to independence.

NATIONAL REVOLUTIONARY COMMAND COUNCIL (NRCC).

Following the **March 8, 1963 Coup**, Syria's new military masters created this ruling body as the executive authority. At first, the members of the NRCC were all officers, including **Ziyad al-Hariri** and **Salah al-Jadid**. The NRCC was to formulate policy and delegate its implementation to a cabinet of ministers responsible to the council. The provisional **constitution** of April 1964 passed the NRCC's executive functions to a Presidential Council.

NAYYUF, NIZAR (1962–). Perhaps the Syrian prisoner of conscience best known outside the country during the 1990s. Nayyuf is a journalist who, in the early 1990s, helped create the **human rights** organization known as the Committee for the Defense of Democratic Freedom and Human Rights. In January 1992, the regime arrested him and four other members of the committee. Nayyuf was tried for illegal political activities as editor of a human rights newsletter, *Voice of Democracy*, and sentenced to prison for 10 years. International human rights organizations protested the trial procedure but to no effect.

During his years in prison, Nayyuf endured torture so severe that it left him permanently disabled. He received several awards for his dedication to press freedom from the **United Nations** and European and American organizations that publicized his case to persuade Syrian authorities to release him. The government finally released him from prison in May 2001, during the visit of Pope John Paul II to Syria, but several weeks later, he was kidnapped in **Damascus** by one of the **security forces** and released the following day on President **Bashar al-Asad's** orders. He then went to **France** to obtain medical treatment. While there, Nayyuf appeared on the Arab satellite television channel al-Jazira and publicly aired allegations of **corruption** by Syrian officials. After he returned to Syria, he reportedly endured more incidents of harassment.

NEO-BA`TH. Radical faction of the Syrian **Ba`th Party** that emerged during the first Ba`thist regime of 1963 to 1966. It included the **Military Committee** and the "Regionalists," younger, more radical civilians and military officers, largely members of religious **minorities** and **Sunnis** from the provinces. In 1965, these radicals came to dominate the Syrian Regional Command of the party. In response, the moderate National Command, under **Michel Aflaq**, announced the Regional Command's dissolution on 19 December 1965 and dismissed the Neo-Ba`thists from government. In the **February 23, 1966 Coup**, Neo-Ba`thist officers led by **Salah al-Jadid** seized power and purged the Syrian Army and government of more than 400 men.

While Jadid was the regime's strongman, as a member of the **Alawi** minority, he preferred to manage affairs from behind the scenes, and he appointed two Sunni medical doctors of the party's Regionalist faction to assume the high offices of state. Accordingly, **Nur al-Din al-Atasi** became head of state (the office of president was abolished) and **Yusuf al-Zu'ayyin** became prime minister. In general, however, the regime carried out a thorough purge of Sunnis identified with the **families** that had dominated Syrian politics for several generations. The Neo-Ba'th pursued a radical agenda in reforming the Syrian **economy**, ranging from state control over **industry** and **trade** to attempts to restructure agrarian relations and production through **land reform**. Its positive achievements include beginning construction of the **Tabqa Dam** on the **Euphrates River** to increase the amount of land under cultivation and electrical power. In part because of the regime's radicalism and to some extent because of its lack of a popular base, the Neo-Ba'thists relied on support from the **Syrian Communist Party**. When the regime brought a communist into the cabinet, it received a boost in aid from the Soviet Union.

In regional **foreign policy**, the regime advocated the overthrow of nearly every Arab regime, particularly the monarchies in **Jordan** and **Saudi Arabia**, so those two countries gave comfort and aid to the regime's many Syrian enemies living in exile. On the other hand, the Neo-Ba'th made overtures to **Egypt's** Gamal Abd al-Nasser, and the two countries restored official relations. Support for **Palestinian** guerrilla groups emerged as another hallmark of the regime, but Palestinian raids triggered retaliation by **Israel**. Violence along the border created a dangerous situation in the **demilitarized zones**, where limited conflict could easily escalate. This was Nasser's fear when he arranged a defense pact with Syria with the expectation that it would give him some leverage and prevent Israel from attacking Syria, in which event he would have to go to war, but a military clash between Syria and Israel in May 1967, and the ensuing steps taken by Nasser to demonstrate support for his ally, led to the **June 1967 War**, which was a disaster for the regime.

After the war, a split in the leadership appeared between Minister of Defense **Hafiz al-Asad** and Salah al-Jadid. The former wanted to concentrate Syria's resources and energies on a military buildup to effectively confront Israel in the quest to regain the **Golan Heights**, which were lost in the war. Jadid preferred a continuation of the regime's policies, including revolution at home and in the Arab world. Matters came to a head in February 1969, when units loyal to Asad seized control of the national media and all sensitive commands. Jadid retained control of the Ba'th Party, and, on 30 October 1970, he convened an emergency national party congress that announced Asad's dismissal from the party and the government. But Asad ignored the decree and two weeks later launched his **Corrective Movement**, in which he completed his takeover of the country and ended the Neo-Ba'th's rule.

NESTORIAN. Also known as the East Syrian Church. It dates to the second century. **Christian** opponents coined the term *Nestorian* after a 5th-century patriarch of Constantinople, Nestorius, whose theological views stressed Jesus Christ's humanity. In 431, the Council of Ephesus declared his views heretical and stripped him of office. Nestorius's teachings nevertheless gained a wide following in Syria and Mesopotamia, and in subsequent centuries, Nestorian Christians were important in proselytizing deep into Asia as far as China. In the history of ideas, Nestorian scholars were important for their many Syriac translations of Greek philosophy from which Arabic translations were made. Modern followers of this church are known as **Assyrians**, and they still use their own Syriac liturgy.

NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES. The first newspapers and magazines appeared in Syria during the late **Ottoman** era, when the provincial government in **Damascus** established a printing press to publish an official gazette. A handful of ephemeral private publications appeared in the 1890s, but **censorship** under Sultan **Abdulhamid II** hampered the spread of journalism. After the constitutional restoration in 1908, newspapers and magazines proliferated in several Syrian towns. For the next few years, print media played a crucial role in expressing diverse views on sensitive political, cultural, and religious controversies, especially those touching on the place of **religion** in Ottoman affairs and the relations between Syrian Arabs and the largely **Turkish** political elite in Istanbul. During **World War I**, the Ottoman authorities again clamped down on free expression and used the press to rally popular support for the empire's desperate military struggle. The brief interval of **Amir Faysal's** rule brought about a relaxation of control over the press.

In the **French Mandate** period, newspapers and magazines again proliferated in new parts of the country and expanded in coverage. **Women's** journals promoted emancipation from traditional customs and instructed readers in hygiene and child rearing. Cultural magazines published short stories, humorous columns, and sports news. During the independence era, there have been just a few brief episodes of press freedom between long stretches of strict censorship under military rule.

When the **Ba`th Party** seized power, it expanded state control of the mass media to propagate official positions and ideas, as well as censor dissenting views. The Ba`th Party regime controls newspapers and magazines through the Ministry of Information, in accord with the **Emergency Law** of 1963, granting the government control of all media. Since that time, Syria has had three major national newspapers. As its name suggests, *Al-Ba`th*, published since 1946, expresses the outlook of the party. When the party seized power in 1963, the new regime created another newspaper, *al-Thawra* (*Revolution*). In the early years of **Hafiz al-Asad's** regime, the last major official news-

paper, *Tishrin* (October), was established. There is little difference among them, not only because they must voice the official line, but also because many columns come from the same government agency, the Syrian Arab News Agency. The political news in these organs is typically one-sided and wooden, but they also carry features on sports and cultural affairs that ordinary Syrians like to follow.

In early 2001, President **Bashar al-Asad** permitted the publication of the first private periodical since 1963, a satirical weekly created by political cartoonist **Ali Farzat**. Political parties in the Ba`th-led Progressive National Front also gained approval to publish their own periodicals. In 2006, there were 146 privately owned magazines. Despite some liberalization in print media, **Kurdish** publications and foreign newspapers are prohibited; privately owned publications are required to submit work to government censors and reveal sources should the government request them. *See also* RADIO AND TELEVISION.

NIQAB. A veil that completely covers a woman's face. In some puritanical interpretations of **Islam**, wearing the niqab is a religious requirement. To some, wearing it is a sign of rigorous piety, while to others, it represents a backward mentality. Wearing a niqab became the center of controversy in 2010, when the minister of education, Ali Sa'd, ordered the transfer of 1,200 niqab-wearing teachers to administration positions. The minister offered no justification for the removal, and the story was not made public for several days. On 18 July, he announced that the niqab was henceforth prohibited on school grounds, claiming it was an insult to Syria's secular identity. The debate surrounding the prohibition of religious attire was highly controversial and received media attention in both Syria and **France**, where a similar law was passed in 2011. The ban was a product of a resurgence of secular sentiment that followed a 2008 bombing in downtown **Damascus** carried out by the extremist group Fatah al-Islam. In the early days of the **Syrian Uprising**, President **Bashar al-Asad** reversed the ban in a bid to placate anti-government sentiment.

NIZARI. A branch of **Isma'ili Shi'is** more commonly but improperly known as the Assassins, a name derived from the Arabic word for users of hashish, *hashashiyyun*. It seems that their **Sunni** enemies accused Nizari leaders of manipulating followers by having them consume hashish. The Nizaris frequently resorted to political murder against Sunni rulers and religious officials. European **Crusaders** then circulated tales of fanatical Nizari agents under the influence of a magical potion carrying out their masters' orders to murder their enemies, so the name "hashashiyyun" passed into Western usage as Assassins.

The Nizaris emerged in the late 11th century, during the course of a succession dispute within the Isma'ili **Fatimid dynasty** of **Egypt**. In 1094, the Fatimid caliph al-Mustansir died, leaving two sons, Nizar and al-Musta'li, to contend for succession. The military chief, who was the power behind the throne, selected the younger, more compliant Musta'li, and Nizar revolted, but his bid for power failed and he was put to death. Nizar's followers, however, gained the support of the powerful and persuasive Hasan-i Sabbah, who ruled over a network of Isma'ili mountain strongholds in **Iran** and formed a distinct branch of the sect called the New Preaching.

In Iran, the Isma'ilis' chief adversary was the **Saljuk** sultanate, and several high ministers met their ends at the hands of Nizari agents. In the early 1100s, Hasan-i Sabbah sent agents to Syria to organize the New Preaching among Isma'ilis there. At that time, Saljuk rule was fragmenting among princes of the ruling house, and the Crusaders had just established their principalities along the coast. For about 30 years, the Saljuk princes of **Aleppo** and **Damascus** countenanced Nizari activities and tried to use them to further their own ambitions. Iranian Nizari missionaries worked to spread the New Preaching under Saljuk protection but made little headway. When the Saljuk prince of Aleppo died in 1113, his successor suppressed the Nizaris in that city, but, in the 1120s, they managed to establish good relations with the ruler of Damascus, the **Atabeg** Tughtigin. As in Aleppo, however, the Nizaris' dependence on relations with a single individual made their standing tenuous, and following Tughtigin's death in 1128, his successor, Buri, incited a mob to massacre several thousand Nizaris. In 1131, Nizari agents from Iran avenged their martyrs by murdering Buri.

With the failure to secure themselves in Syria's main cities, the Nizaris repeated the formula that had worked in Iran—that is, establishing fortresses in remote mountain areas, in this case the rugged **Jabal Ansariyya** in northwest Syria. Between 1132 and 1141, they obtained by conquest and negotiation several strongholds, including **Masyaf** and Qadmus, which became the nuclei for Nizari power for the next century. The Syrian Nizaris, then, comprised part of a larger Nizari polity based in northern Iran at the impregnable mountain fortress of Alamut near the Caspian Sea. The noncontiguous Nizari state included holdings in northwest Syria and western, northern, and eastern Iran. The Nizari ruler at Alamut was recognized as the supreme authority throughout this vast realm, and Nizari chiefs in Syria were always Persians sent by Alamut.

In the 12th century, the Nizaris became bitter enemies of the Atabegs **Imad al-Din al-Zangi** and **Nur al-Din Mahmud**, as well as of **Saladin**, founder of the **Ayyubid dynasty**. The Nizaris reached the pinnacle of their influence in Syria under Rashid al-Din Sinan, who was their chief from 1162 until 1193. He twice tried to assassinate Saladin, in 1175 and 1176. Following the second attempt, the Ayyubid ruler invaded Jabal Ansariyya and be-

sieged Masyaf, the chief Nizari stronghold, but failed to take it. By the early 13th century, relations between the Nizaris and Ayyubids had improved, and they cooperated in warfare against Frankish enemies. The overthrow of the Ayyubids by the more powerful **Mamluks**, however, drastically altered the Nizaris' prospects. In the 1260s, **Sultan Baybars** demanded and received tribute from them and then seized control of their mountain fortresses between 1271 and 1273, thereby extinguishing the independent Nizari state.

NONCONVENTIONAL WEAPONS. Syria is a signatory to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, but it has not ratified the biological weapons treaty or signed the chemical weapons treaty. The earliest estimate for Syrian efforts to develop chemical weapons is the 1970s, when **Egypt** and Soviet Bloc governments may have provided assistance. A special agency, the Scientific Studies and Research Center, is said to oversee projects related to nonconventional weapons. In the 1980s, Syria purchased equipment and materials from European pharmaceutical companies to develop the capacity to produce medicine. The same equipment and materials may be converted into chemical weapons. During the 1990s, Syria reportedly refined its expertise in this field with **Russian** assistance. Intelligence agencies in the **United States** and **Israel** estimated that Syria had the capacity to produce tons of chemicals annually. Syria developed the capacity to deliver chemical warheads, including VX and Sarin nerve gas, with surface-to-surface missiles, aircraft, and artillery. In the 1980s, Syria obtained ballistic missiles from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, **Damascus** turned to North Korea and **Iran** for assistance. By 2003, Syria had acquired several hundred Scud B, Scud C, and short-range ballistic missiles. In June 2005, the military tested three Scud missiles as part of a joint project with North Korea. One of the missiles broke up over **Turkish** territory, generating controversy among international actors who fear Syrian intentions toward Israel. Damascus improved its Scud D missile technology with assistance from North Korea.

Syria is suspected of developing biological weapons capabilities with assistance from the Soviet Union, Iran, **Iraq**, and North Korea, but the nation is not believed to have turned biological agents into weapons. Syria's delivery systems for chemical weapons could be used for biological agents with little modification.

In September 2007, Israel conducted an air raid (Operation Orchard) on a site where North Korea was helping Syria construct a nuclear reactor in eastern Syria, near **Dayr al-Zur**. Both U.S. and Israeli intelligence officials have claimed that the al-Kibar site was a covert reactor program and requested that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) investigate. President **Bashar al-Asad** vehemently denied the allegations but did not allow nuclear inspectors into the country until 2008. By then, the building

believed to have contained the reactor had been bulldozed and replaced, making it difficult for the inspectors to find traces of atomic activity. On 16 November 2009, the IAEA Board released a report claiming to have found undeclared uranium in the area and a possible secondary reactor site in Damascus. Syrian officials rejected the report's findings, citing uranium fallout from Israeli missiles during the 2007 raid as responsible for any atomic samples collected during the investigation. Following the initial inquiry, Syrian officials halted cooperation and refused to grant IAEA inspectors a second visit, arguing that Damascus had already fulfilled its commitment to the agency. In May 2011, a second IAEA report was published containing physical and photographic evidence that suggested that Syria was "very likely" engaging in nuclear activity at the time of the 2007 Israeli raid. In June 2011, the IAEA reported Asad to the **United Nations** Security Council, where the agency's board of directors adopted a resolution condemning Syria for violating international nonproliferation obligations.

The **Syrian Uprising** has raised several concerns about chemical weapons. Government forces could use them against rebel militias and in civilian areas, and, in early 2013, there was ambiguous evidence to indicate they had done so. Fighting between opposition groups and government forces could damage facilities storing chemicals and contaminate nearby areas. Israel remains alarmed at the prospect of **Hizballah** obtaining chemical weapons. In addition, if the government would lose control of its stockpiles, such extremist groups as al-Qa`ida could acquire them.

NORIA. Perhaps the most famous landmarks in **Hama** are the towering waterwheels, or norias, on the **Orontes River**. They are specimens of a hydraulic technology that dates to late antique times in the Fertile Crescent, and in early **Islamic** times, they spread from **Iran** to Spain. Hama's 17 norias convey the river's **water** to an aqueduct that supplies the town and surrounding fields. The largest one measures 30 meters in diameter. Their graceful motion and constant low-pitched groaning make them a familiar city emblem and **tourist** attraction. The recent construction of dams upriver for irrigation has diminished the flow of the Orontes, thus in the autumn months, it is not unusual for the level to fall too low to drive the norias.

NUR AL-DIN MAHMUD (r. 1146–1174). Son of **Imad al-Din al-Zangi**, the **Atabeg** of northern Syria and northern **Iraq**. Nur al-Din became the ruler of northern Syria upon Zangi's murder in 1146. He is renowned as an energetic leader of military campaigns against the **Crusader** states of Antioch and Jerusalem, as well as against rival Muslim rulers. In 1154, he joined his northern Syrian domain to the south by conquering **Damascus**, thereby bringing the country under local unified control for the first time since the

fall of the **Umayyad dynasty** 400 years before. Nur al-Din also made Damascus an important political capital for the first time since the Umayyads. He fortified the city's defenses and patronized **Sunni** religious institutions, including the Adiliyya **madrasa**, which, in the early 20th century, housed the Arab Academy, a historical and literary research institute.

Having secured his position in Damascus, Nur al-Din spent the following years struggling to impose his authority on rulers of petty states in central and southern Syria, in addition to frequent campaigns against the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem. A new field of ambition opened up in 1163, when a palace revolt forced out the vizier, or chief minister, of the **Fatimid dynasty** in **Egypt**. This man, Shawar, went to Damascus to ask Nur al-Din to restore him to power in exchange for annual tribute and control of one of Egypt's rich **agricultural** districts. The following year, Nur al-Din's **Kurdish** vassal, Shirkuh, invaded and briefly occupied Egypt. Shirkuh brought along a nephew, **Saladin**, who became governor of Alexandria. The threat of attack by the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem on Egypt led Nur al-Din to again dispatch Shirkuh in 1168; this time he stayed, only to die several months later. Leadership of the expedition then passed to Saladin, who laid the foundations of **Ayyubid** rule in Egypt and brought about the end of the Fatimid dynasty in 1171. Nur al-Din then became alarmed at the potential threat represented by Saladin should the vassal decide to extend his rule to Damascus. Nur al-Din was preparing to attack Saladin in Egypt when his death in 1174 prevented conflict. Some writers emphasize Nur al-Din's contributions to the political revival of Sunni **Islam** in Egypt and Syria. For instance, he ordered his vassal Saladin to suppress the **Isma'ili** Fatimid **caliphate**, and he also ordered the construction of 11 madrasas in Damascus and seven in **Aleppo**.

NUSAYRI. *See* ALAWI.



OCTOBER 1973 WAR. Also known as the Ramadan War to Arabs and the Yom Kippur War to Israelis. On 6 October, Syria and **Egypt** launched a surprise attack on **Israel** to recover the **Golan Heights** and the Sinai Peninsula, both of which Israel had conquered in the **June 1967 War**. At the outset, Syrian forces broke through Israeli defenses in the Golan Heights and advanced to within a few kilometers of Israel's border. On 9 October, however, the Syrian offensive ran out of steam in the face of stiff Israeli resistance, which inflicted high casualties on the attacking forces. To hamper the delivery of military supplies from the Soviet Union, the Israeli Air Force attacked airport runways in **Damascus** and **Aleppo**, in addition to Syria's main ports.

Egyptian forces had also scored early victories against Israel, most notably the unexpected feat of crossing to the east bank of the Suez Canal in the face of Israel's imposing network of defensive installations. When Egypt slowed its offensive in the Sinai Peninsula, however, Israel was able to mobilize its forces for a massive counterattack against the Syrians on 11–13 October. The Israeli offensive advanced several kilometers beyond the 1967 cease-fire line but failed to capture a village on the road to Damascus that would have brought the Syrian capital within artillery range. Israel's military leaders then felt that they had a secure situation in the north, so they turned their attention to the Egyptian front. Between 14 and 23 October, Israeli forces turned back an Egyptian attempt to advance and then launched a counterattack across the Suez Canal. On 22 October, the parties agreed to abide by a cease-fire resolution passed by the **United Nations** Security Council, but Israeli troops on the west bank of the Suez Canal pressed their advantage for the next two days as they tried to completely encircle portions of the Egyptian Army on the canal's east bank. The Soviet Union then threatened to intervene directly, which led the **United States** to exert pressure on Israel to abide by the cease-fire. At war's end, Syria had lost about 3,500 soldiers, Israel some 2,800, and Egypt 5,000 in fighting that included some of the largest tank battles in history. After the conclusion of hostilities, **United Nations Resolution 338**

was passed in the hope that Israel and Syria might accept its terms for a negotiated resolution of their dispute. *See also* UNITED NATIONS DISENAGEMENT OBSERVER FORCE (UNDOF).

ORONTES RIVER. *Al-Asi* in Arabic. Syria's second major river after the **Euphrates River**. The Orontes rises in **Lebanon's** Bekaa Valley near Baalbak and then meanders northward into Syria through a number of lakes and marshes. Approximately 470 kilometers of its 570-kilometer course runs through Syrian territory. The Orontes is the main waterway in central Syria, and the region's main cities, **Homs** and **Hama**, are situated along its banks. The government built two dams in the 1950s, a fairly large one at Rastan and a small one at Muharda, to store **water** for irrigation. Because towns along the banks dump their waste into it, the Orontes' water is not fit for drinking. North of Hama it turns northwest into **Turkey** before heading west toward the Mediterranean Sea, where it empties south of Antioch. Whereas the Euphrates is the subject of international dispute, the riparian states sharing the Orontes' waters have not clashed. In 1994, Syria and Lebanon agreed on a division of its water that allocates a modest portion to Lebanon, which meets both present and anticipated future needs. In 2010, Syria and Turkey agreed on a joint project to construct a dam on the Orontes. By the time it is complete, the dam will have cost about \$1.25 billion to build. It is designed to irrigate 30,000 hectares of land.

OTTOMAN EMPIRE. Ruling empire of Syria from 1516 until 1918. The dynasty first rose in northwestern Asia Minor in the 1320s. Border fighting with the **Mamluks** began in the 1480s along the Syrian/Asia Minor frontier. In August 1516, Sultan **Selim I** led Ottoman forces, armed with artillery and other gunpowder weapons, to victory over the Mamluks near **Aleppo**. In the context of the enormous Ottoman Empire, Syria was reduced to the status of a minor province, but it held importance for the Ottoman dynasty's religious legitimacy because it was the staging point for the annual pilgrimage to Mecca. For the next 60 years, Ottoman authority was firmly established, but in the last three decades of the 16th century, Istanbul's hold weakened, and local forces centered on the **janissaries** asserted themselves against Ottoman governors in Aleppo and **Damascus**. This contest continued throughout the 17th century and into the 18th century, until the Ottomans found reliable allies in the powerful **Azm** clan to serve as governors. For several decades, members of the Azm clan brought stability to much of Syria. The tendency to rely on local figures to govern Syria continued in the late 1700s and early 1800s under **Ahmad Pasha**, nicknamed "al-Jazzar."

By the early 1800s, the Ottoman Empire faced threats from European powers and disarray within as conservative forces fended off attempts to reform the empire's administrative and military institutions. In Syria, the Ottomans were shocked by the invasion launched in 1831 by **Muhammad Ali of Egypt**. The Ottomans did not recover the province until 1840, and then only with the assistance of the European powers. The remainder of the 19th century saw a sustained effort to strengthen the empire's ability to defend itself and control its lands and population. This drive for administrative and military modernization took place under both secular direction in the **Tanzimat** period and under religious leadership during the reign of Sultan **Abdulhamid II**.

In 1908, military officers belonging to the **Committee of Union and Progress** launched a mutiny to force the sultan to institute constitutional government, thereby shifting power at the center of the empire from the sultan to a group of officers and bureaucrats. The new rulers promoted cultural policies that many Syrians construed as anti-Arab, and in reaction the cultural prelude to **Arab nationalism** developed. The Ottoman Empire's leaders entered **World War I** on the side of Germany against **Great Britain** and **France**. The empire's disastrous defeat in the war terminated four centuries of Ottoman rule in Syria. *See also* ABID, AHMAD IZZAT AL- (1851–1924); AGHA; ALEPPO MASSACRE OF 1850; ARCHITECTURE; ARMENIANS; CENSORSHIP; FATAT, AL-; IBRAHIM PASHA (1789–1848); JAZA'IRI, TAHIR AL- (1852–1920); JULY 1860 DAMASCUS MASSACRE; KAWAKIBI, ABD AL-RAHMAN AL- (1849–1903); MIDHAT PASHA (1822–1884); OTTOMAN LAND CODE OF 1858; OTTOMAN PARTY OF ADMINISTRATIVE DECENTRALIZATION; QAB-BANI, AHMAD ABU KHALIL AL- (c. 1833–1902); QAHTAN SOCIETY; QASIMI, JAMAL AL-DIN AL- (1866–1914); RIDA, MUHAMMAD RASHID (1865–1935); SALAFIYYA; SAYYADI, ABU AL-HUDA AL- (1850–1909).

OTTOMAN LAND CODE OF 1858. During the **Tanzimat** era, the **Ottoman Empire** embarked on an ambitious program to thoroughly reform its legal framework. The 1858 land code was a milestone not only in the empire's legal reform, but also in the history of land tenure in much of the Middle East. It established a land registry office to issue deeds, thereby formalizing long-standing property claims. The most profound effect of the code in Syria was the fostering of the rise of a class of absentee landowners among urban notables who exploited their control over credit and knowledge of land registration procedures to accumulate vast holdings. Their efforts were facilitated by peasants' apprehension that registration of their property could make it easier for the authorities to tax and conscript them. Consequently, many peasants registered the lands they cultivated in the names of

urban notables; others became ensnared in debt to urban creditors and gave up their lands to lessen the amount of money they owed. By the early 1900s, **Sunni** landowners in **Damascus, Aleppo, Homs, Hama, and Latakia** thoroughly dominated the Syrian countryside and used their agrarian wealth to become the leading economic stratum in the country. Furthermore, their wealth enabled them to play the leading part in politics for nearly a century, until the **land reforms** of the **United Arab Republic** and **Ba'th Party** regimes wiped out the effects of the 1858 code and undermined the agrarian base of their power.

OTTOMAN PARTY OF ADMINISTRATIVE DECENTRALIZATION. Established in Cairo in January 1913, to promote the cause of provincial autonomy in the **Ottoman Empire's** Arab regions. This short-lived party, largely composed of Syrian émigrés living in Cairo, opposed the **Committee of Union and Progress** regime's centralist policies, which tightened Istanbul's hold on the provinces. The party joined with other groups in convening an Arab Congress in Paris in June 1913. Members of the congress issued the only formal public declarations of the Ottoman period claiming to represent the interests of the Arabs to the Ottoman rulers. Its resolutions specifically favored administrative decentralization and the use of Arabic in provincial administration. The government responded with indications of willingness to grant some demands, but it eventually adopted a strong policy against the Arab autonomists.

P

PALESTINE. During the **Ottoman** era, Palestine was part of the province of **Damascus** and had strong economic, cultural, and social ties with Syria. When the European powers separated Palestine from Syria at the end of **World War I**, nationalists in both countries fought for the reintegration of southern Syria, that is, Palestine. Throughout the **French Mandate** era, the Syrian and **Palestinian** nationalist movements supported one another, but effective cooperation proved difficult because they faced two different colonial powers, **France** in Syria and **Great Britain** in Palestine. Moreover, the Palestinians confronted a unique challenge in the Zionist project to establish a Jewish state.

The first major demonstration of Syrian popular sympathy for the Palestine Arab cause was sparked by the latter's 1936 revolt against Zionist immigration and the British Mandate. Syrians launched strikes and demonstrations, donated funds, smuggled weapons, and recruited fighters in support of the revolt. The British, however, suppressed the Palestinian revolt and dispersed the Palestinian Arab leadership by the spring of 1939. At the same time as the Palestinian revolt, Syria's **National Bloc** was struggling to wrest from France a measure of self-government, an effort that failed in 1939. During **World War II**, British forces used Palestine to stage their 1941 invasion of Syria to remove a Vichy administration.

After the war, Syria gained its independence in April 1946. While the Arabs of Palestine waged a desperate political battle to keep their homeland intact in 1946–1948, the newly independent Syrian government was just taking shape and struggling to manage the basic tasks of administration. The strong sympathy of Syrians for their Arab brethren compelled the government to oppose the **United Nations** resolution to partition Palestine into Jewish and Arab states, and even to attempt military intervention, but the government lacked the capacity to prevent an **Israeli** victory in the **Palestine War of 1948**.

For the next 20 years, Syrian governments faced two political issues that emerged in the war's aftermath. Most immediately, Palestinian **refugees** in Syria and other countries sought repatriation as required by United Nations

Resolution 194. Second, most Syrians and other Arabs wished to eliminate Israel and regain Palestine for the Palestinians. The **June 1967 War**, however, changed the territorial situation. Israel conquered the **Golan Heights** from Syria, the West Bank from **Jordan**, and **Gaza** and the Sinai Peninsula from **Egypt**. Arab states gradually drifted to the idea of **trading** land for peace on the basis of **United Nations Resolution 242**. Thus, if Syria were to regain the Golan Heights and the Palestinians were to establish an independent state in the West Bank and Gaza, peaceful relations with Israel could result. Syria formally embraced that formula at the **Madrid Conference** in 1991. For nine years after Madrid, it appeared that the parties might inch their way toward a comprehensive settlement, but Israel's talks with Syria collapsed in early 2000, and with the Palestinians later that same year. *See also* FOREIGN POLICY; PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION (PLO).

PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION (PLO). From its foundation in 1964 until 1968, when guerrilla groups took control, the PLO was essentially an instrument of **Egyptian foreign policy**. During that period, Syria was at odds with Egypt; consequently, Syria supported Yasir Arafat's Fatah organization, then independent of the PLO, and helped Fatah launch raids against **Israel** beginning in 1965. There was a brief breakdown in relations between Fatah and the **Neo-Ba`th** regime in 1966, but for the most part, Syria supported Fatah before and well after the **June 1967 War**. In the September 1970 conflict between **Palestinians** and the government of **Jordan**, Syria sided with the PLO and supported its establishment of a new headquarters in **Lebanon** following its expulsion from Jordan.

In Lebanon's weak polity, the PLO developed a firm base of power that allowed it greater independence of action. When PLO actions did not coincide with Syrian interests, clashes ensued. During the **Lebanese Civil War**, the PLO decided to support Lebanese groups seeking to radically alter Lebanon's political system. Syria, on the other hand, opposed those groups and consequently collided with the PLO in the summer of 1976. The following year, the two sides mended fences under the impetus of Maronite efforts to obtain support from Israel and Egyptian president Anwar Sadat's visit to Jerusalem. Israel's March 1978 invasion of south Lebanon further consolidated Syrian-PLO relations.

A more extensive Israeli invasion four years later launched the **Lebanese War of 1982**, which forced the PLO to transfer its headquarters to Tunisia. When it attempted to reconsolidate its position in northern Lebanon in order to regain some freedom to maneuver, Syria supported a mutiny of Fatah officers against Yasir Arafat. At the end of 1983, Arafat and forces loyal to him were expelled from Tripoli by Syrian-backed Palestinians. Tensions between the PLO and Syria persisted as the former strove to find a way to participate in diplomatic efforts sponsored by the **United States** to resolve

the Arab–Israeli conflict, which omitted Syria. For the latter, the fundamental concern was preventing progress on Arab–Israeli negotiations that did not address Israel’s occupation of the **Golan Heights**.

Iraq’s August 1990 invasion of Kuwait reshuffled regional relations, as the PLO backed Saddam Husayn and Syria supported the U.S.-led intervention. After the victory of the coalition forces, both Syria and the PLO agreed to attend the 1991 **Madrid Conference**, which led to negotiations between Israel and both parties. Relations again took a turn for the worse when the PLO struck a separate deal with Israel in the August 1993 Oslo Accords, thereby undermining Syria’s strategy of presenting Israel with a unified Arab negotiating position. To weaken Arafat, Syrian president **Hafiz al-Asad** backed factions that rejected Arafat’s diplomatic efforts. These factions included the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command. While they do not carry much weight in the West Bank and Gaza, they have effectively contended with Arafat’s Fatah for influence among **refugees** in Lebanon and Syria. During the 1990s, Asad also provided support to organizations outside the PLO, including the **Islamic fundamentalist** groups **Hamas** and Islamic Jihad.

When Ehud Barak became Israeli prime minister in May 1999 and indicated a stronger interest in talks with **Damascus** than with the Palestinians, Arafat sought to meet with Asad, who by then had decided that he could never rely on Arafat and must therefore pursue Syria’s interests separately. These efforts failed, the Oslo talks hit a dead end in the summer of 2000, and the second Palestinian uprising broke out shortly thereafter. The general failure of peace talks, coupled with Hafiz al-Asad’s death in June, created the conditions for a rapprochement between the PLO and the Syrian government, but the relationship in the early 21st century was complicated by internal rifts and divisions within the PLO.

In 2008, President **Bashar al-Asad** hosted a Palestinian Unity Conference. While one of the stated goals of the conference was to rebuild the PLO and enhance it so that it was capable of functioning, there were some who felt that the conference would deepen divisions between Palestinian factions by creating an alternative PLO. Most notably, President Mahmud Abbas of the Fatah party boycotted the conference on these grounds. In July 2008, the Asad government worked to bridge the divide between Fatah and Hamas when President Abbas visited Syria. The meetings between Asad and Abbas went well, with the two leaders discussing the need for Palestinian unity and movement toward peace negotiations between Syria and Israel. The Asad regime’s efforts to get Abbas to meet with Hamas were unsuccessful, however, and the trip was deemed a failure. Unity efforts were attempted again in 2009, but this time Syria worked with several other Arab states, including **Saudi Arabia** and Egypt. These talks arose out of a renewed effort for

Palestinian unity following Israeli attacks in the Gaza Strip. While the talks were hosted in Damascus, Egypt's intelligence chief, Umar Sulayman, mediated the effort. Despite an unusual degree of coordination between Arab heads of state, divisions between Palestinian groups were insurmountable.

In July 2011, President Asad officially recognized the state of **Palestine** as part of an international campaign to have the state of Palestine (within the 1967 borders) officially recognized in the **United Nations**. Asad also announced that the PLO office in Damascus would serve as the Palestinian embassy in Syria. The **Syrian Uprising** complicated the relationship between the government and the PLO. The Syrian Navy's attempt to quash demonstrations in the coastal city **Latakia** put Palestinians near the al-Raml refugee camp in danger. As 10,000 Palestinian refugees fled the heavy fighting and gunfire, Palestinian officials called on Damascus to safeguard their lives but acknowledged that their policy of noninterference in the internal affairs of Arab states left them powerless to assist their brethren.

PALESTINE WAR OF 1948. On 29 November 1947, the **United Nations (UN)** General Assembly voted in favor of a resolution to partition **Palestine** into Jewish and Arab states. Public opinion in Syria vehemently opposed partition. A mass strike was held in **Damascus**, and huge crowds stormed the buildings housing the legation of the **United States** and the cultural office of the Soviet Union because of their votes in favor of the UN resolution. Anti-Jewish riots in **Aleppo** destroyed hundreds of homes and 11 synagogues and killed more than 70 **Jews**. In the early months of 1948, Syrian volunteers began to enter Palestine to support Arab forces that were already fighting the Zionists and attacking Jewish settlements. As the 14 May deadline for British withdrawal from Palestine drew closer and Zionist military forces gained the upper hand, Arab public opinion pushed leaders to plan an armed intervention. Syria's political leadership, including Prime Minister **Jamil Mardam**, boasted that Arab armies would easily triumph. Syria contributed between 3,000 and 4,000 troops to the joint Arab cause, but they were poorly trained and ill-equipped for the conflict.

When the British completed their withdrawal, the Zionists proclaimed the independent state of **Israel**, whereupon **Egypt**, **Lebanon**, and Syria intervened to block partition. For its part, **Transjordan** outwardly participated in the Arab front but actually favored partition between the new Jewish state and itself. On 16 May, Syrian units entered northeastern Palestine, but most of the war's fighting centered on the Egyptian and Transjordanian fronts. During the phase of fighting before the first truce on 11 June, Syrian forces gained a foothold around Lake Huleh. Israel used the truce to obtain huge stores of arms and mobilize more men, so that when fighting resumed on 8 July, its forces made large gains in central Palestine, but not against the

Syrians, who managed to expand their hold in the northeast. As the war wound down in December, Syrian forces occupied small portions of Palestine, which became **demilitarized zones**.

Syrians had been led to expect a quick and easy victory, and Israel's military successes prompted widespread anger at the government for its incompetence. The ensuing political turmoil was a key factor in Colonel **Husni al-Za'im's** 30 March 1949 military coup. The new regime agreed to a permanent cease-fire on 13 April 1949, and the two parties signed the **Armistice of 1949** on 20 July. *See also* PALESTINIANS.

PALESTINIANS. During the **Palestine War of 1948**, more than 700,000 Palestinians became **refugees** in neighboring Arab countries. This mass exodus was caused by a combination of expulsions by **Israeli** forces and flight from wartime dangers. While the bulk of refugees settled in the West Bank, Gaza, and **Transjordan**, about 90,000 Palestinians went to Syria. A second, smaller wave of refugees came after the **June 1967 War**, and the **Lebanese War of 1982** triggered yet another exodus of several thousand Palestinian refugees into Syria, fleeing the fighting caused by the Israeli invasion.

The **United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA)** was created in 1950 to provide basic services to refugee camp residents. Its chief functions are in the areas of **education**, public sanitation, and vocational training. Three of the four largest camps—Sabayna, Qabr al-Sitt, and Khan Ashiya—are located outside **Damascus**. The other large camp, Nayrab, is near **Aleppo**. Smaller camps are located outside of **Homs**, **Hama**, and **Dar'a**. In addition to the **United Nations (UN)** camps, there are three unofficial camps. The largest is Yarmuk, now a suburb of Damascus, with more than 100,000 residents. In addition to UN services, the Syrian government created a special administration for settling and providing aid to refugees. By 2012, the number of registered refugees was close to 500,000, and the UNRWA was operating 111 schools with more than 63,000 pupils.

The status of Palestinians has been governed by piecemeal legislation, mostly passed between 1949 and 1956, that granted them employment rights not held by other non-Syrian residents. For instance, Palestinians can work in the civil service and the modern professions. Moreover, the government has allowed them open access to public education through the university level. These legal provisions and the Palestinians' proportionately small numbers in the overall population have enabled them to integrate into the Syrian **economy** and society. Consequently, approximately 70 percent of the Palestinians no longer reside in refugee camps but have moved into nearby cities. Palestinians were not free to pursue independent political activities; rather, successive Syrian regimes, particularly since the 1960s, have strictly controlled Palestinian politics on Syrian soil.

After the **Syrian Uprising** broke out in 2011, Palestinians were divided on whether to side with the opposition or the regime. Many felt that any action could jeopardize their future in Syria should they back the wrong side. Ambiguous neutrality did not keep them out of the struggle, in part because Syrian government officials tried to divert attention from the protests by organizing a campaign of Palestinian marches to the border in the Israeli-occupied **Golan Heights**. Syrian **security forces** and Syrian-sponsored Palestinian factions assaulted refugees who refused to participate in the marches.

In June 2011, the Yarmuk refugee camp on the outskirts of Damascus was attacked by pro-Syrian Palestinian soldiers during a funeral procession for protesters killed while attempting to breach the Israeli border. Mourners denounced the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (the party allegedly responsible for organizing marches in the Golan Heights), and then armed groups violently dispersed demonstrators, killing at least 20. Protesters later attacked the group's headquarters in retaliation.

During the government siege of **Latakia** in August 2011, 10,000 Palestinian refugees were forced to flee Syrian naval shelling of the al-Raml refugee camp. In response to the attack, Palestinian authorities called on Damascus to safeguard the lives of thousands of refugees living in the country. UNRWA officials were denied access to the embattled area for several days before relief efforts could be orchestrated with state approval. *See also* FOREIGN POLICY; PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION (PLO).

PALMYRA. This desert city is one of Syria's most renowned ancient sites. Inscriptions from the second millennium BC mention it as an oasis settlement and entrepôt for **trade** between the Mediterranean and Mesopotamia (**Iraq**). The ruins that **tourists** visit today date from the Roman era. The main avenue includes facades of wealthy merchants' palaces, as well as temples, **theaters**, and statues. The city is famous for the revolt waged by Queen Zenobia against Roman rule (267–272). Archaeological sites that date back to the Roman era became tourist attractions for Palmyra, but the **Syrian Uprising** disrupted the country's tourism **industry**. The modern city of Tadmur has grown near Palmyra. It is a base for tourists and Syria's phosphate **mining** and natural gas sectors. *See also* PETROLEUM.

PEOPLE'S PARTY. Two distinct parties have existed under this name. The first was established by **Abd al-Rahman Shahbandar** in June 1925, to promote the establishment of a constitutional regime in a unified Syria that would include **Palestine**, **Transjordan**, and portions of **Lebanon**. It was the first legal nationalist party under the **French Mandate**. The People's Party was active for only a brief period, during which it abetted the spread of the

Great Revolt of 1925–1927. The **French** suppressed the party during the revolt. In its short history, the People's Party attracted members of the urban elite, including wealthy landowner politicians, merchants, and educated professionals. It also enjoyed the financial support of the **Syrian–Palestine Congress** in Cairo.

The second People's Party formed in 1948, in opposition to the **National Party**. Both parties had roots in the **National Bloc**, but regional and personal rivalries tore the Bloc apart, and former members from Syria's northern cities—**Aleppo**, **Homs**, and **Hama**—established the new People's Party. Former National Bloc members included **Hashim al-Atasi** and **Nazim al-Qudsi**. The party generally represented northern and central Syrian business and landowning interests in favor of economic union with **Iraq**, whose northern regions were historically important to the **trade** of northern Syria.

The party reached the peak of its influence between 1949 and 1951, under the military regimes of **Sami al-Hinnawi** and **Adib al-Shishakli**. It received a strong plurality of votes in the November 1949 elections and engaged in a duel with Shishakli regarding control of the gendarmerie and the army. Shishakli decisively won this struggle with his 28 November 1951 coup against the elected government and arrest of leading members of the party. People's Party leaders were among those who plotted Shishakli's overthrow two years later, and they regained some of their influence by taking over prominent cabinet posts and gaining a plurality of seats in the parliament elected in September 1954. But the next few years saw Syrian politics drift to the left, and the People's Party was unable to effectively combine with other conservative forces to stop that tendency.

PETROLEUM. While Syria is not a major oil producer for the global market, its modest output has been its most important export and source of foreign exchange since the early 1980s. The first commercially significant discovery of oil took place in 1959, in **Jabal Druze**, near **Suwayda**. The German company that made the find did not receive a concession to develop the field. The **Ba'th Party** government nationalized petroleum in 1964 and created the General Petroleum Authority, but oil exports had to await the construction of a pipeline to **Tartus** from the northeast oil fields in 1968.

Production did not take off until **Hafiz al-Asad's** regime encouraged exploration by offering better concessionary terms to foreign firms. The result was the discovery of new fields in the desert near **Dayr al-Zur** and a doubling of production from 1974 to 1980. In 1987, Western firms opened production in more fields discovered in northeastern Syria. Output increased from 162,000 barrels per day in 1985 to 560,000 barrels per day in 1993. By the end of 1994, production had reached 600,000 barrels per day, enough to bring in 70 percent of the country's export earnings. The government invited foreign companies to explore for new oil fields near the borders of **Turkey**

and **Iraq**. In the late 1990s, production stabilized in the range of 560,000 to 600,000 barrels per day, thanks to additional exploration efforts by European, U.S., Japanese, and Malaysian firms. Syrian reserves total about 2.5 billion barrels. Since peaking in the 1990s, production declined to 387,000 barrels per day in 2010.

The infrastructure for transporting and refining petroleum included the **Iraqi-Syrian Pipeline** (constructed in 1934), which stretched from Iraq's Kirkuk field to two destinations, one in Tripoli, **Lebanon**, and another in **Baniyas**, which opened in 1952. This pipeline, however, was destroyed during the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq. The major oil refinery is at **Homs**, with a second smaller one at Baniyas.

The petrochemical sector includes large reserves of natural gas in the desert near **Palmyra** and in **Jazira**, with national reserves measuring 8.5 trillion cubic feet. In the early 1990s, Syria developed a natural gas field that produced between 4.5 and 7 million cubic meters per day, and, by the late 1990s, the quantity had risen to 14 million cubic meters per day. Because Syrian oil-fired power stations were converted to natural gas, pressure on supplies rose rapidly and is expected to double by 2020, thus even though natural gas production was expected to increase, it was not likely to meet increases in demand, even before the **Syrian Uprising** disrupted operations.

In 2003, Syria built its first pipeline for exporting natural gas to Lebanon. This was part of a plan to become a natural gas exporter, but gas did not begin to flow until six years later. In addition, due to rising domestic demand, Syria was forced to begin importing natural gas from Egypt through the **Arab Gas Pipeline**. In 2010, Syria also signed a pipeline agreement with Azerbaijan, which allowed gas to flow from Azerbaijan through Turkey and into Syria. In July 2011, Syria, Iraq, and **Iran** signed an agreement to construct the Islamic Gas Pipeline to carry gas from Iran to Europe through Iraq and Syria. The pipeline was projected to cost \$10 billion and take three to five years to complete.

Petroleum exports, although modest in scale compared to those of Gulf countries, were crucial in keeping Syria's **economy** afloat. In the 1980s, petroleum exports accounted for between 40 and 75 percent of total exports; during the 1990s, that figure hovered in the 55- to 65-percent range. Dependence on petroleum exports to European partners left the government vulnerable to the sanctions imposed in response to its violent crackdown on protesters during the Syrian Uprising. In the first two years of the uprising, sanctions cost the Syrian economy \$4 billion, forcing the government to utilize its **currency** reserves. In the turmoil, average production fell from about 400,000 barrels per day in 2009 to less than 200,000 in 2012. The government lost at least partial control of the oil sector during the course of fighting opposition forces when major producing areas fell into rebel hands in the early months of 2013.

POPE JOHN PAUL II. On 5 May 2005, Pope John Paul II paid a historic visit to Syria as part of a three-nation tour to Greece, Syria, and Malta. The pope visited the **Umayyad Mosque**, where John the Baptist is believed to be buried. He impressed many Muslims by kissing the Qur'an and calling for cooperation among **Christians**, Muslims, and **Jews** to bring peace to the Middle East. The visit was controversial given the anti-Zionist comments made by Syria's minister of religious affairs, Muhammad Ziyada, and President **Bashar al-Asad**. During his four-day stay, the pope visited **Qunaytra**, which **Israeli** forces completely destroyed in 1974. He also met with Syrian **Greek Orthodox** archbishop Agnatios Hazim IV, who welcomed him on behalf of Syrian Christians.

PRIVATIZATION. *See* ECONOMIC REFORM.

PUBLIC SECTOR. Since the wave of nationalizations initiated by the **Ba`th Party** regime in the early 1960s, Syria's **economy** has been dominated by the public sector. The first steps to extend government control of economic activity were actually taken in the early years of independence by pro-business cabinets seeking to curtail the foreign economic influence that had dominated Syria's economy during the **French Mandate**. They nationalized foreign companies operating **railways** and **water** and power utilities. During the 1950s, a fairly even balance of political power in the domestic arena prevented measures to expand the range of government economic activity until the **United Arab Republic's Socialist Decrees** paved the way for public-sector organizations to manage **banks**, insurance companies, **mining**, and **petroleum** production.

A deeper and more radical phase of instituting socialism occurred in the mid-1960s under the Ba`th Party regimes, largely as part of a political strategy to overwhelm rivals whose power stemmed from their connections to Syria's business community. The Ba`thist regimes created new bodies, usually called "General Organizations," to manage much of the economy. Examples include the General Organization for Insurance, General Organization for Food Industries, General Organization for Textile Industries, and General Organization for Phosphate and Mining. The management of these firms has been handled by a mix of Ba`th Party officials, **trade** union representatives, and political appointees.

The performance of public-sector firms in economic terms was, not surprisingly, unimpressive. They tended to hire many more employees than were needed to run an enterprise, but such overemployment was politically useful for co-opting men and **women** who would otherwise be jobless. Government ministries usually set prices at low levels as an indirect subsidy

to the Syrian consumer. Low morale and pay induced more talented and motivated workers to seek work for better remuneration in the private sector, leaving less productive employees behind.

Given the poor performance of public-sector firms, they received criticism from proponents of **economic reform**, but their political utility and clout made the regime cautious about allowing private firms to compete with public-sector companies. Observers of Syria's economic prospects acknowledged the political constraints on a thorough reform of the public sector, but even the country's limited reform measures have swung the balance of economic dynamism in favor of the private sector. This was confirmed in 2004, when the Syrian Ministry of the Interior announced that public-sector companies had lost \$1.2 billion due to economic reforms. Between 2000 and 2008, productivity in the **industrial** public sector fell 15 percent, with more than half of public-sector manufacturers experiencing decreases in productivity between 2004 and 2008. Declining productivity stemmed partly from **corruption** and lack of competent workers. More than 25 percent of workers had a primary-level **education**, and less than half of the public-sector workforce had intermediate institute and university-level qualifications.

Q

QABBANI, AHMAD ABU KHALIL AL- (c. 1833–1902). Founder of modern **theater** in Syria. Qabbani came from a **Damascus family** of traders. As a young man, he would entertain evening gatherings with his singing of poems. Inspired by the **Lebanese** productions of Marun al-Naqqash (1817–1855), he decided to stage a play for relatives around 1865. Soon thereafter, he gave the first public performance at a **coffeehouse**. Qabbani was a playwright, actor, singer, and composer of songs. Performances usually included songs, and his plays freely borrowed from Arabian Nights, popular legendary characters, and European plays. The reformist **Ottoman** governor **Midhat Pasha** encouraged his efforts and sponsored the construction of a playhouse for regular public performances. Not long after the governor's departure, however, conservative opinion pushed the Ottomans to close the theater and pressured Qabbani to leave **Damascus**. He briefly resided in **Homs** and then permanently moved to **Egypt**.

QABBANI, NIZAR (1923–1998). Leading contemporary poet best known for his early erotic compositions in the 1940s and 1950s. Qabbani's frank treatment of young men's sexual desire and descriptions of **women** as objects of that desire made him a frequent center of controversy. In 1954, his poem "Bread, Hashish, and Moon" expressed a searing critique of Arab culture for its ignorance and backwardness, and conservative critics poured scorn on him for betraying cherished cultural values. At the same time that he was publishing his first collections of poetry, he worked in the Syrian Foreign Service and held diplomatic posts in the Middle East, Europe, and Asia, but, in 1966, he quit the Foreign Service and moved to **Lebanon**.

Qabbani was as much a celebrity as a literary figure, and the Arab public eagerly followed his dramatic private life. He left his first wife when he fell in love with an **Iraqi** woman, who became the subject of his love poetry in the 1970s. Tragedy struck his life when his oldest son was killed in an accident and his wife perished in a **terrorist** attack on the Iraqi embassy in

Beirut. Controversy followed him even after he died in London, where conservative Muslims objected to a memorial service on the grounds that he was an atheist.

The social implications of Qabbani's oeuvre are complex. On the one hand, he expressed yearnings to emancipate the individual from stifling social conformity (he even made homosexual love a subject), and he sometimes poured scorn on **corrupt**, oppressive Arab regimes. On the other hand, his political poetry occasionally exalted an authoritarian cult of the strong leader, be that **Egypt's** Gamal Abd al-Nasser in the 1960s or Iraq's Saddam Husayn in the 1990s, and he glorified clichés about revolution and armed struggle against **Israel** at a time when the public mood was moving in the direction of compromise. In sum, Qabbani's poetry fits the model of the 19th-century European Romantic Movement that celebrated the individual and responded to broader social and political currents through emotion and sentimentalism. In the general sweep of modern Syrian **literature**, critics and ordinary folks highly esteem both his love poetry and social criticism.

QAHTAN SOCIETY. In 1909, a few Syrians living in Istanbul formed this small secret society, named after an eponymous ancestor of the Arabs, to defend Arab rights against what its members perceived as the **Committee of Union and Progress's** campaign to "Turkify" the **Ottoman Empire's** administration. The society sought the transformation of the empire into a dual monarchy similar to the Austro-Hungarian Empire. In certain respects, the Qahtan Society anticipated the platform of the **Ottoman Party of Administrative Decentralization**, which appeared in 1913.

QAMISHLI, AL-. This city of about 200,000 in the country's northeastern corner developed after **World War I**, when **French Mandate** authorities settled **Assyrian, Armenian, and Kurdish refugees** from **Turkey** along the banks of the Juqjug River, a tributary of the **Khabur River**. Its largely non-Arab population reflects the historical character of upper Mesopotamia. Modern Syrian governments have encouraged Arab settlement in and around al-Qamishli, perhaps because of the belief that ethnic Arabization is essential to maintaining national unity. Given the heterogeneous population, there has been intermittent tension, particularly between Assyrians and Kurds, as recently as 1970. Al-Qamishli also attracted a colony of Syrian **Jews**, but they departed in the early 1990s, like many of their coreligionists.

On the Turkish side of the border is the ancient town of Nusaybin. Because of unfriendly bilateral relations, the border crossing has ordinarily been closed, cutting off residents of the two towns, many of whom are related to one another. Al-Qamishli's location near the juncture of Syria's border with

Iraq and Turkey made it an important **transportation** hub, with **railway** lines linking the three countries. The city's economic role grew with the development of nearby oil and gas fields in the 1980s and 1990s.

In March 2004, riots broke out in al-Qamishli after a clash between Kurds and Arabs at a football game. **Security forces** shot and detained several people in the following days, killing 33 Kurds and injuring many more. Kurdish protesters were rounded up and tortured, while Kurdish students were expelled from universities for participating in demonstrations. Many attributed the spike in Kurdish unrest to gains by neighboring Iraqi Kurds after the 2003 U.S. invasion overthrew Saddam Husayn.

QARMATI. **Isma`ili Shi`i** sect named for Hamdan Qarmat, who preached among the peasants of southern **Iraq** in the 870s and directed other preachers to spread Isma`ili teachings among **Bedouin** tribes in the Syrian and north Arabian deserts. In 899, the Qarmatis split from those Isma`ilis who followed the leadership of Ubayd Allah when he claimed to be the **imam**. The Qarmatis held that the line of imams had already ended and that the seventh imam would soon return as the *mahdi*, the rightly guided messianic figure anticipated in Shi`i **Islam**. Ten years later, Ubayd Allah's movement established an Isma`ili **caliphate** in North Africa and founded the **Fatimid dynasty**. In the meantime, Bedouin tribes under Qarmati leadership attacked and briefly occupied **Damascus**, **Homs**, and **Hama** between 902 and 906. Counterattacks by forces loyal to the **Abbasid** caliph in Baghdad drove the Qarmatis from the Syrian Desert, but they created a separate state in the region of Bahrain in eastern Arabia. Hamdan Qarmat disappeared in Iraq shortly thereafter.

While the Qarmati state consolidated itself in Bahrain, the Fatimids built up their power in North Africa and prepared for the conquest of **Egypt**, which they achieved in 969. Qarmati armies became active in Syria again in the 960s, with attacks on Damascus, towns in **Palestine**, and even Egypt. One year before the Fatimid invasion of Syria, Qarmati forces from Bahrain occupied Damascus, thus setting the stage for a violent confrontation between two wings of the same Shi`i sect. For 10 years, Qarmati and Fatimid armies struggled for domination of southern Syria. First, a Fatimid force seized Damascus in 970, but the following year, the Qarmatis formed an alliance with the **Hamdanids** of **Aleppo** and the Buyid princes of Baghdad and regained the city. The Qarmatis' dependence on tribal forces unwilling to permanently settle in a city, however, meant that they could not hold on to Damascus. In 971 and 974, the Qarmatis carried the offensive into Egypt, laying siege to Cairo, the new capital of Egypt, which had been founded by the Fatimids. The Fatimids finally dealt the Qarmatis a decisive defeat in 978, and drove them out of Syria permanently. The Qarmati state in Bahrain, however, survived for yet another century.

QASIMI, JAMAL AL-DIN AL- (1866–1914). Leading figure in the **Sala-fiyya** movement of the early 20th century. Qasimi was the prayer leader at the Sinaniyya Mosque in **Damascus**, the second most prestigious mosque in the city. He was a prolific writer in various fields of religious knowledge, history, and contemporary affairs. The central themes in his works were the essential rationality of **Islam** and the need for Muslims to overcome divisions between followers of different legal schools. Qasimi believed that Muslims would remain backward in relation to Europe until they rediscovered Islam's true nature as a **religion** that is based on reason so that it encourages a positive attitude toward science and technical progress. With respect to divisions among Muslims, he argued that it was necessary to return to Islam's sources (the Qur'an and the tradition of the Prophet) to provide a common ground, and to abandon beliefs and practices that had developed during the long course of Muslim history but were not part of Islam's essence.

More conservative **ulama** attacked Qasimi's ideas because they represented a strong criticism of their own view of Islam. Consequently, on several occasions, they stirred the **Ottoman** authorities to harass him and incited mobs against him. Although Qasimi did not win a wide following during his lifetime, contemporary Salafis hold him in high regard, and his works continue to circulate among reformist Muslims in the Arab world.

QAWUQJI, FAWZI AL- (1887–1976). Army officer. Qawuqji was a captain in the Syrian Legion, created by **France** as the core of a national army when the **Great Revolt** against the **French Mandate** broke out in July 1925. In early October, he led **Bedouin** and mutinous soldiers in an uprising against the French presence in **Hama**. A few days later, a French aerial bombardment spearheaded a counterattack to secure the town and drive the rebels into the countryside, where Qawuqji continued to lead rebel efforts until the end of the revolt nearly two years later. He then fled to **Iraq**. Qawuqji entered the spotlight again during the **Palestine** Arab Revolt of 1936 to 1939, when he led Syrian volunteers who went to Palestine to fight British and Zionist forces. In the months preceding the 1948 partition of Palestine and the **Palestine War of 1948**, Qawuqji also led a militia of Arab volunteers called the Arab Liberation Army.

QINNASRIN. This small village on the banks of the **Quwayq River**, south of **Aleppo**, was once the primary military stronghold in northwest Syria for the **Byzantines** and then the **Umayyads**. Qinnasrin continued to serve its strategic function for later Muslim dynasties until a series of Byzantine raids in the late 10th and early 11th centuries reduced it to a minor settlement serving caravans between the **Euphrates River** and the coast.

QUDSI, NAZIM AL- (1906–1998). Nationalist lawyer from **Aleppo** who was active in the **National Bloc's** radical Aleppan faction during the **French Mandate**. During the independence period, Qudsi grew estranged from the **National Party** leadership, and on the eve of 1947 elections, he and other Aleppan dignitaries formed the Liberal Party. A few months later, he participated in the creation of a broader opposition party, the second **People's Party**. During **Sami al-Hinnawi's** brief rule in 1949, Prime Minister **Hashim al-Atasi** formed a government dominated by the People's Party, and he appointed Qudsi minister of foreign affairs. The Atasi government wanted to create a new constitutional order for Syria, so it decided to hold elections for a Constituent Assembly. In the September 1949 elections, the People's Party gained a plurality, and the assembly named Qudsi to head a committee to draft a new **constitution**. The draft document underwent some modification when the assembly debated its articles, and it was ratified in September 1950. Meanwhile, **Adib al-Shishakli** had seized power the previous December, and, in June 1950, he chose Qudsi to form a government. As prime minister, Qudsi faced strong opposition from the National Party and was frustrated by the army's encroachment on civilian control of the gendarmerie, yet he did achieve the first nationalizations of French and British utility companies before resigning in March 1951.

After Syria's secession from the **United Arab Republic** in September 1961, the People's Party gained the largest bloc of seats in national elections, and its leader, Qudsi, became president of the **Syrian Arab Republic**. At the time of the abortive coups d'état of March–April 1962, Qudsi was placed under arrest for two weeks but was then restored to office. The **March 8, 1963 Coup**, however, swept him from power. The **National Revolutionary Command Council** then formally stripped him of his civil rights and imprisoned him until the end of the year. The veteran political leader left Syria and spent the rest of his life in exile, first in **Lebanon** and then in **Jordan** from 1986 until his death in 1998.

QUNAYTRA. In 1873, **Russia's** conquests in the Caucasus Mountains triggered the flight of **Circassian refugees** to the **Ottoman Empire**. The **Turkish** authorities resettled them in the **Golan Heights**, where they established Qunaytra and other villages nearby. In 1967, it was a town of 17,000. **Israel** occupied Qunaytra during the **June 1967 War** and forced the population to flee, leaving it a ghost town for several years. After the **October 1973 War**, the 1974 disengagement agreement stipulated that Israel return Qunaytra to Syria. Before withdrawing, Israeli troops systematically dynamited houses, both those damaged in the two wars and those that had escaped harm. The destruction of Qunaytra further poisoned Syrian attitudes toward Israel.

QUWAYQ RIVER. This rather small river flows from the foothills of the Taurus Mountains into northwest Syria. **Aleppo** developed along its banks in remote antiquity. For centuries, the Quwayq River supplied the city and watered its renowned pistachio orchards, but in recent decades, population growth has led to excessive exploitation to the point it is barely a trickle. Aleppo now obtains **water** for municipal use from the **Euphrates River's Lake Asad**.

QUWWATLI, SHUKRI AL- (1891–1967). A leading nationalist during the **French Mandate** and president for nine of Syria's first 15 years of independence. Quwwatli joined **al-Fatat** during **World War I** and supported the **Arab Revolt**; the **Ottomans** imprisoned him for his nationalist activities. During **Amir Faysal's** brief reign, Quwwatli was active in the nationalist **Istiqlal Party**. When **France** occupied Syria in 1920, he fled to **Egypt**, where he joined the **Syrian–Palestine Congress**. He spent the next 10 years in exile, like many other nationalists whom the French considered to be too dangerous to allow back into Syria. In 1930, however, France issued a general amnesty, and Quwwatli returned. He reentered the political arena in 1932, when he joined the **National Bloc**, and he soon became the head of the more radical faction that challenged party chief **Jamil Mardam's** leadership. In 1936, Quwwatli was elected to parliament, and Mardam named him minister of defense and finance. Mardam's leadership of the National Bloc government failed to advance Syrian nationalist goals, and, in 1939, Quwwatli defeated him in a contest for leadership of the Bloc.

When elections were held for Syria's first independent government in July 1943, Quwwatli was elected president. His tenure saw the final evacuation of French forces and the eruption of the **Palestine War of 1948**. Syria's poor performance in the conflict contributed to **Husni al-Za'im's** military coup of March 1949, which ended Quwwatli's presidency. He then moved to Egypt, as he had nearly 30 years before.

After **Adib al-Shishakli's** overthrow, Quwwatli returned to Syria in August 1954 to boost the **National Party's** election campaign. In September 1955, he again became president, but with far less authority than before. He led Syria through crises regarding the **Baghdad Pact**, the Suez War, the **Conspiracy of 1956**, military threats by **Turkey**, and finally unity talks with Egypt. Quwwatli's last political act was to resign as president of Syria to allow Gamal Abd al-Nasser to assume the presidency of the **United Arab Republic**.

R

RADIO AND TELEVISION. Electronic media have been under complete state control since the early 1960s. Typical radio broadcasts include **music** and news, but there are also informational and comedy programs. Aside from the state radio network, which operates more than a dozen stations, Syrians frequently listen to Arabic-**language** foreign programs on British Broadcasting Company, Radio Monte Carlo, and **Egyptian** and even **Israeli** programs. The two official television channels carry Syrian and Egyptian serials; documentaries on history, folklore, and economic development; and heavily censored news. Syrians who live near **Lebanon** or **Jordan** have more options because they may tune in to radio and television programs from these neighboring countries.

In the 1990s, satellite channels burst state monopolies throughout the Arab world, and in this respect, Syria was no different. The most popular satellite channel is unquestionably al-Jazira, an all-news outlet based in **Qatar**. After its creation in 1996, al-Jazira rapidly attracted a large audience because it offered Arab viewers lively, candid coverage of regional events. Syrians tuned in to watch programs that dealt with topics never debated in public forums, including **Islamic fundamentalism**, **human rights**, and democratic reforms. Another satellite channel, Syria al-Sha'b, was created by Syrian groups opposed to the Asad regime. Official television channels responded with cosmetic changes, but more substantial shifts could only occur if the overall political situation became freer.

For a brief time, it seemed that Syrian media would shake off heavy government restrictions. In 2001, President **Bashar al-Asad** authorized Presidential Decree No. 50, endorsing the establishment of private media outlets. The legislation expanded media coverage and launched periodicals, websites, television channels, and radio stations aimed at improving the quality and quantity of information available to the general public. In 2005, the government passed a law allowing privately owned radio stations. As of 2010, there were 15 of these privately owned radio stations, which covered local issues. While some viewed this development as progress for free speech in Syria, broadcasting remained subject to **censorship**, and journalists still risked im-

prisonment if they offended the government. Critics pointed out that privately owned radio stations primarily cared about profits rather than elevating public discourse, and because of this, these stations were likely to shy away from controversial programming. Some programs did venture to broadcast satires on **corruption** and even the **security forces** (*mukhabarat*). For example, soap operas broadcast during Ramadan criticized government policies, practices, and officials. *See also* NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES.

RAILWAYS. Modern **transportation** came to Syria during the reign of Sultan **Abdulhamid II**, who granted concessions to European companies to construct railways. In 1891, a **French** company completed a line between Beirut, **Damascus**, and the **Hawran**. Two years later, a railway linking Damascus and **Aleppo** was finished. In 1911, a foreign company completed work on a railway line between Tripoli and **Homs**. The most important line for Abdulhamid was one to connect Damascus and Mecca to ease the difficult journey of the pilgrim caravan from Syria. When it opened in 1908, the Hijaz Railway reduced the journey from 40 days to just five, even though it never went past Medina.

The expansion of Syria's rail network slowed considerably during the **French Mandate** and the instability that plagued the country's early years of independence. In the 1970s and 1980s, new lines connected **al-Qamishli** to **Dayr al-Zur**, Aleppo, and **Latakia** to allow easier transport of crops from **Jazira** to major cities and the coast. A second main line was built to link **Tartus** to the existing line from Homs to Aleppo. These rail lines to interior zones stimulated population growth and economic development around **al-Raqqa**, the **Tabqa Dam**, Dayr al-Zur, **al-Hasaka**, and al-Qamishli. Since the 1990s, the Syrian government has focused more on improving paved roads for motor transport rather than expanding and improving the rail network.

RAQQA, AL-. Located at the point where the **Euphrates River** and Balikh River come together, this city is located at a site inhabited since antiquity, called Nikephorion in the Seleucid and **Byzantine** eras. In the **Umayyad** period, its garrison anchored the dynasty's authority in the turbulent **Jazira** region. The **Abbasids** constructed a new, more heavily fortified town, al-Rafiq, near the older site to strengthen defensive lines against the Byzantines. For a time, the area encompassed by these neighboring towns formed the second-largest urban area in the Abbasid Empire, and for a brief spell around 800, they were the imperial capital under Caliph Harun al-Rashid, who made it the headquarters for annual military campaigns against the Byzantines and the pilgrimage caravan to Mecca. In spite of the area's prox-

imity to the early Muslim empires' perennial **Christian** adversary, the town's Christian community continued to reside there, as did its **Jewish** inhabitants.

In addition to its political role, al-Raqqa was the site of scientific endeavors, particularly in astronomy, and it acted as an important artistic bridge between the Mediterranean and Persian zones and became renowned for its ceramics. The town came under **Hamdanid** rule in 942, and it quickly declined in population and importance until a period of revival in the 12th and 13th centuries under **Zangid** and **Ayyubid** rulers. The **Mongol** invasions and wars with the **Mamluks** ended al-Raqqa's role as an important military center and resulted in its desertion.

In the late 19th century, the **Ottoman Empire** settled the town with **Circassian refugees** fleeing from **Russian** expansion in the Caucasus. Since independence, al-Raqqa has become the seat of a governorate, and it is now a bustling city of approximately 250,000. The main impetus for its recent growth was the construction of **Tabqa Dam**, which made it the center of a developing **agricultural** region. The Syrian Department of Antiquities manages an **archaeological** museum displaying Abbasid-era artifacts. The earliest remains date to the Abbasid era and include portions of an 8th-century wall. During the **Syrian Uprising**, al-Raqqa became the first provincial capital to fall into rebel hands in March 2013.

REFUGEES. In 2012–2013, the evolution of the **Syrian Uprising** into a ferocious civil war engulfed civilians, whose exodus from the country strained the resources of neighboring countries and international aid agencies. As government forces and insurgents fought for control of urban neighborhoods, towns, and villages, residential quarters were struck by mortars and bombed by government airplanes and helicopters. **Shabiha** militias and insurgent groups perpetrated atrocities against civilians suspected of supporting one side or the other. In areas where the fighting was most intense and prolonged, supplies of food, fuel, and medicine became scarce, and the government cut electricity and **water** to areas under rebel control. As a result of insecurity and hardship, growing numbers of Syrians left their homes, usually moving to other parts of the country, but often seeking havens in neighboring countries.

By the end of 2012, the number of refugees registered with the **United Nations (UN)** reached nearly 500,000. The pace of flight increased in the first four months of 2013, with another 700,000 Syrians leaving the country by the end of April. Counting unregistered refugees, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees estimated close to 1.4 million Syrians to have fled the country by that time. **Jordan** and **Lebanon** had the largest concentrations of refugees, with approximately 500,000 each; **Turkey** had about 400,000 refugees, and **Iraq** had approximately 150,000. In the fall of 2012, Turkey and

Jordan attempted to restrict entry because the number of refugees was straining the capacity of camps to provide food, water, and shelter. As a result, ad hoc camps sprouted on the Syrian side of the border, and residents held demonstrations calling for permission to cross the border. There were no precise figures for the number of internally displaced Syrians, but, in May 2013, the UN estimated the total at 4 million, about half of them clustered near **Aleppo** and **Damascus**.

RELIGION. Syria has a rich history of coexistence and intermittent tension or conflict between adherents of **Islam**, **Christianity**, and Judaism. At the time of the Arab conquest, Syria had a largely Christian population, in addition to several **Jewish** communities residing in the main towns. The Christians were mostly **Greek Orthodox**, but there were also **Syrian Orthodox** and **Nestorians**. The majority of the population gradually converted to Islam by the 13th century. Many details of that process remain unclear to historians, but the image of forced conversion at swordpoint comes from medieval Christian polemical writings, not historical accounts. Instead, historians have concluded that a combination of political, fiscal, economic, and social factors brought about conversions in the main towns and that Muslim settlement in the countryside spread Islam to rural areas. Just as Christianity's historical development resulted in the emergence of several distinct denominations, so did Islam's. **Sunni** Muslims have been politically and numerically dominant in the cities, but several **Shi'i** minority sects, including the **Druzes**, **Nizaris**, and **Alawis**, are firmly anchored in the countryside.

Throughout the centuries of Muslim rule, political authorities derived part of their legitimacy from their public commitment to Islamic ceremonies and symbols. The **Crusades** era was a period of strife between Muslim and Christian powers and pressure on Christians living under Muslim rule. Otherwise, relations between the two religions were mostly free of strain until the mid-19th century, when Muslim antagonism to European power and the perception that Syrian Christians exploited ties to their coreligionists led to the outbreak of communal riots in **Aleppo** and **Damascus**.

In the 20th century, the **French Mandate** (1920–1946) marked an abrupt break in nearly 1,300 years of Muslim rule (except for coastal areas held by the Franks during the Crusades). During the 1940s, the position of the country's Jews deteriorated as **Arab nationalist** sentiment became inflamed at the prospect of a Jewish state displacing **Palestinian** Arabs. Attacks on Jews and their property shortly before and during the **Palestine War of 1948** prompted many to emigrate. Failure thereafter to resolve the conflict with **Israel** created difficult circumstances for Syrian Jews, and their numbers dwindled as one regime after another imposed harsh conditions and even close surveillance.

In contrast to the deteriorating situation of Jews, the standing of Christians in independent Syria has been as good as or better than in other Arab countries. Nevertheless, the place of religion in public life came to the fore in Syrian politics when the **Ba`th Party** seized power in 1963 and pursued secular policies that angered a large segment of the Muslim population. A prolonged struggle between the regime and **Islamic fundamentalist** militants was fueled, in part, by the conspicuous role in the Ba`th Party of individuals belonging to such Muslim sects as the Alawis and the Druzes. Indeed, the head of state since 1970 has been an Alawi, **Hafiz al-Asad**, and then his son **Bashar al-Asad**. The struggle petered out after the 1982 **Hama** uprising, and interreligious relations were calm for the next 30 years. In the 1990s and first years of the 21st century, Syria was notable among Middle Eastern countries for the secure position of religious **minorities**, with the exception of the Jews, most of whom emigrated in the mid-1990s.

RIDA, MUHAMMAD RASHID (1865–1935). Syrian-born writer who spent most of his life in **Egypt** (from 1897 to 1935). Rida is best known as the publisher of *al-Manar* (*The Lighthouse*), a periodical dedicated to religious reform, which he edited from 1898 until his death in 1935. In addition to issuing what was arguably the most influential Arabic Muslim journal of the 20th century, Rida's essays and articles contributed to the elaboration of thought in the **Salafiyya** reform movement, particularly his writings on legal and **educational** reform. In the early 1920s, he contributed a seminal work on the **Islamic** state. The timing of this work was significant, as it came out shortly before **Turkey** abolished the **caliphate**, the 1,300-year-old institution representing Muslim political authority.

In the arena of Syrian political life, Rida was a critic of the **Committee of Union and Progress's** policies, perhaps because of their secular bias, and he participated in the **Ottoman Party of Administrative Decentralization**, which supported greater autonomy for the Arab provinces. After **World War I**, Rida returned to Syria, supported the ephemeral regime of **Amir Faysal**, and presided over the **Syrian Congress** of 1920. When **France** crushed Faysal's state, Rida returned to Cairo and, in the early years of the **French Mandate**, served as vice president of the **Syrian–Palestine Congress** Executive Committee.

RUSSIA. In the early 1950s, many Syrians viewed good relations with the Soviet Union as a means to maintain independence from British and American influence. The foundation stone for warm relations was laid on 23 March 1955, when Soviet foreign minister Vyacheslav Molotov warned **Turkey**, which had massed troops along the border, against threatening Syria to force it into joining the **Baghdad Pact**. This was followed by a series of

arms deals during the next three years. In February 1956, Syria negotiated the purchase of weapons from Czechoslovakia; in August, there followed a Soviet–Syrian cultural agreement. Syria then made **trade** pacts with other communist nations. This notable increase in Soviet influence benefited the **Syrian Communist Party (SCP)**, which broadcast its ideas to a more sympathetic population. In August 1957, Soviet influence grew even more with the signing of yet another economic agreement that included financing for development projects and the purchase of Syrian **agricultural** exports. Syria's drift toward the Soviets, however, was abruptly halted by the formation of the **United Arab Republic (UAR)** in 1958 and the subsequent suppression of the SCP.

The conservative regimes that followed Syria's secession from the UAR did not pursue better relations with the Soviets, and the first chance for some improvement came after the **March 8, 1963 Coup**. Relations with the **Ba'th Party** regime were initially cool, but they improved in 1964, with the ascendance of more radical members of the party. In April 1966, the Soviets offered to help Syria build a dam on the **Euphrates River**. In the wake of Syria's defeat in the **June 1967 War**, the Soviets resupplied the Syrian **armed forces**.

After **Hafiz al-Asad** came to power in 1970, the Soviets continued to provide military equipment and advisers, and they again resupplied Syria after the **October 1973 War**. Syrian–Soviet relations received another boost in 1979, when **Egypt** signed a peace treaty with **Israel** under the auspices of the **United States**. The Soviets reinforced Syria's position against Israel by agreeing to a huge arms deal. Syria indicated its support for the Soviets by refusing to criticize their invasion of Afghanistan at the end of 1979. The peak of Syrian–Soviet relations was reached when the two countries signed the October 1980 Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation. That was followed by another series of large arms transfers in 1982 and 1983, including the Soviet Union's most sophisticated missile defense system (manned by Soviet experts) and long-range surface-to-surface missiles.

At the end of the 1980s, however, Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev drew clear limits to his country's willingness to arm Syria when he advised President Asad to seek a negotiated solution to the conflict with Israel. When Gorbachev engineered the Soviet Union's withdrawal from Eastern Europe and rapprochement with the United States in 1989–1990, Syria became alarmed that it would lose the backing of its superpower patron. The end of the Cold War fundamentally altered the geopolitical context of the Arab–Israeli conflict, and President Asad adroitly adjusted his **foreign policy** to the new context by improving ties with the United States while maintaining good relations with the new Russian state that emerged from the defunct Soviet Union in 1991.

In the post-Soviet era, Syria remained one of Moscow's few allies in the Middle East due to their long history of cooperation on political, economic, military, and diplomatic ventures. Ties between the two countries reflect a history of mutual interest in Middle Eastern affairs, particularly warding off strong U.S. influence. Syria has provided Russia with access to the Mediterranean Sea and demonstrated political support during periods of international isolation, for example, the backlash against the 2008 invasion of Georgia. From the Syrian perspective, an alliance with Russia guarantees a partner whose political leaning balances American power in the region.

In January 2005, President **Bashar al-Asad** embarked on an official state visit to Russia, signaling a turning point in relations between the two countries. During the early years of Vladimir Putin's presidency, Moscow had pursued better relations with **Israel**, but his reversal of course initiated a phase of close rapport with Damascus. Facing Western sanctions in the wake of the 2005 **Rafiq al-Hariri assassination**, Asad sought to strengthen his ties with Russia. He and Putin stressed the need to define **terrorism** as an act separate from ethnic or religious beliefs (a direct reference to U.S. president George W. Bush's "War on Terror"). Putin agreed to write off 73 percent of Syria's debt and negotiated weapons sales to improve Damascus's defense missile systems. The following month, Tatneft became the first Russian oil company to formalize an agreement aimed at exploring and developing new oil and gas deposits in Syria. During the remainder of Putin's presidency, Moscow pursued a prominent role in regional affairs by supplying Syria with military assistance and diplomatic backing.

In August 2008, Asad embarked on his third state visit to Russia since assuming office in 2000. The move was widely interpreted as an attempt to boost relations and defy international criticism of Moscow's 2008 invasion of Georgia. President Dmitry Medvedev engaged in talks with the Syrian leader during which Asad expressed full support for the Caucasus War and a renewed desire for strong bilateral relations. Likewise, the Russian president communicated his readiness to play a larger role in Syrian-Israeli peace negotiations. In response to Washington and Tel Aviv's political and material backing of Georgia, the Russian leader facilitated the purchase of advanced weapons for Damascus. The visit signaled a change in Russia's attitude toward the United States and marked a renewed commitment to long-time ally Syria.

In May 2010, President Medvedev embarked on a visit to Damascus aimed at further enhancing bilateral relations and expanding Moscow's influence in Middle East affairs. Medvedev's visit to Syria was the first by any Russian head of state since the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. It resulted in a 14-point declaration and promises of cooperation in defense, **trade**, **education**, and **tourism**.

During the **Syrian Uprising**, Russia has maintained strong ties with the Asad regime. Moscow shielded the Syrian government against efforts at the **United Nations** to pass resolutions condemning it and calling for international sanctions. Arms supplies from Russia have been essential to the government's battle against rebel militias. Russia was due to deliver its most advanced anti-aircraft missile system in 2013, which would bolster the Syrian government's defenses against intervention by Israel or the Western powers. *See also* NONCONVENTIONAL WEAPONS.

RUWALA. A **Bedouin** tribe whose members are concentrated in northwestern **Saudi Arabia**, while a smaller number lives in Syria and **Jordan**. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, their domain from southern Syria to northern Arabia felt the encroachment of expanding forces, the **Ottomans** from the north and the Saudis from the south. At the same time, the modernization of **transportation** ended their economic role as caravanners for long-distance overland **trade** and forced them to rely exclusively on raising livestock. The demarcation of national boundaries divided Ruwala tribesmen among three countries, so the bonds of tribal affinity were now, in theory, compromised by divergent national loyalties. Because the tribal chief, Nuri Sha`lan, had his summer camp near **Damascus**, he became a Syrian citizen and a member of the Chamber of Deputies in the 1930s. Shaykh Nuri embodied the integration of tribal leaders into the national political system, but friction between tribesmen and national governments reemerged in the 1960s under the **Ba`th Party** regime, and a substantial section permanently resettled in Saudi Arabia. While the Ruwala tribe's influence on Syrian history has been fairly slight, their experience reflects that of many other nomadic tribes, for whom the establishment of definite international borders forced deep changes in their way of life.

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SA'ADA, ANTUN AL- (1904–1949). Founder of the **Syrian Social National Party (SSNP)**. Sa'ada was born to a **Greek Orthodox Lebanese family**. His father immigrated to **Brazil** during **World War I**, and Antun moved there in 1920. While in Brazil, Sa'ada developed his ideas about Syrian nationalism. In 1929, he returned to Lebanon and, in November 1932, formed the SSNP, originally called the Syrian National Party. He kept the party secret and initially recruited among students at the American University of Beirut. As party membership grew, Sa'ada decided to compose a party **constitution** and a manifesto in 1934. When **French Mandate** authorities uncovered the party in November 1935, they arrested Sa'ada on charges of subversive activities and sentenced him to six months' imprisonment. Following his release, he began to recruit members in the Syrian province of **Latakia** and campaigned against **Turkey's** imminent annexation of **Alexandretta**. Sa'ada left Lebanon in 1938 to organize party cells among Syrian emigrants in Brazil, where he spent the next nine years.

While he was out of the country, SSNP members in Lebanon changed the party's name to the National Party and transformed it into a more conventional Lebanese party focusing on Lebanese political issues. When Sa'ada returned to Lebanon, he ousted the men responsible for this deviation and reestablished his status as the party's sole authority. His relations with the Lebanese government were always fraught with tension, as the very essence of his political thought denied the legitimacy of an independent Lebanon. In June 1949, he and his party were charged with plotting to overthrow the government; he then fled to **Damascus**, where he plotted with Syria's military ruler, **Husni al-Za'im**, to bring down the Lebanese government. In July, Sa'ada's followers launched a few minor attacks on remote police stations in Lebanon. Za'im then betrayed him by arresting and handing him over to the Lebanese on 6 July. The next day, a military court tried him for treason and executed him on 8 July. This violent end made him a martyr in many quarters and actually boosted the SSNP's standing in both Syria and Lebanon.

Sa'ada's political thought centered on the idea of the Syrian nation, which, in his view, had roots in historical and geographical bonds among various ethnic and religious groups. His notion of Syria encompassed **Iraq**, Syria, Lebanon, **Jordan**, **Palestine**, the Sinai Peninsula, and Cyprus. According to Sa'ada, the historical mission of the Syrian nation necessitated its political unity under a secular regime.

SAFAR, ADIL (1953–). Prime minister from 2011 to 2012. From the outskirts of **Damascus**, Safar studied at the National High School of Agriculture and Food, where he received his Ph.D. in biotechnology. He served as agriculture secretary at the University of Damascus and, in 2000, became the school's **Ba'th Party** branch director. In 2002, Safar was named director general of the Arab Centre for the Studies of Arid Zones and Dry Lands. The following year, he was appointed minister of agriculture, a position he held until his promotion to prime minister. After the 2012 parliamentary elections, he was replaced by **Riyad Hijab**.

SALADIN (c. 1138–1193). In Arabic, Salah al-Din al-Ayyubi. Renowned military hero of the Muslim effort against the **Crusades** and founder of the **Ayyubid dynasty**. Saladin began his rise to power in the service of **Nur al-Din Mahmud**, the **Atabeg** who had established unified authority over Syria in 1154. As Nur al-Din's agent in Cairo, Saladin accomplished the termination of the **Fatimid caliphate** and the restoration of nominal **Abbasid** authority of **Egypt**. In 1175, one year after Nur al-Din's death, he placed both Syria and Egypt under his own authority. Saladin is best known for his military efforts against the Crusaders, especially the 1187 Battle of Hattin, which led to the Muslim recapture of Jerusalem. By 1189, Saladin had uprooted most of the Latin strongholds along the Syrian coast as far north as **Latakia**, but three years later, a European counterattack, known as the Third Crusade, forced him to retreat from key coastal towns. Nonetheless, upon his death on 4 March 1193, Saladin was the first Muslim to rule both Egypt and most of Syria in nearly two centuries.

SALAFIYYA. This term refers to two distinct trends in modern **Islam**. The earlier one was a 19th- and 20th-century Islamic reform movement whose advocates believed that Muslims became vulnerable to European domination because they had strayed from the correct practice of their **religion**, so they called for a return to the religious beliefs and practices of the first generation of Muslims (*al-salaf al-salih*). The movement emerged in **Damascus** in the 1890s among a number of **ulama** conversant with reformist tendencies in other Muslim lands. Syrian Salafis of the **Ottoman** period, for example, **Tahir al-Jaza'iri** and **Jamal al-Din al-Qasimi**, strove for reforms in Mus-

lim **education** and law (**shari`a**) to combat the growing influence of secularism in the Ottoman Empire. They also encouraged an Arab cultural revival through their research on Arab history. Moreover, in the Ottoman political context, the Salafis favored the restoration of constitutional government, which had been suspended by Sultan **Abdulhamid II** in 1878. Their views on cultural and political matters attracted younger Syrians studying in secular schools and informed this rising generation's conceptions of **Arab nationalism**. During the **French Mandate** era, Salafis founded religious associations that provided the foundations for the Syrian branch of the **Muslim Brotherhood**.

The more recent Salafi trend emerged in the 1990s, outside Syria, among militant **Islamic fundamentalists** committed to removing secular Arab regimes in **Egypt** and Algeria and engaged in the conflict to evict from Afghanistan the regime that was backed by the **Soviet Union**. The militant Salafis, frequently referred to as "Salafi jihadists," are quite different in aims and methods from the earlier ones, but they both use the term *Salafi* to legitimize their claim to represent a return to pure Islam. During the **Syrian Uprising**, militant Salafis rose to prominence for their fighting prowess against government forces, in large measure thanks to the participation of veteran militants who fought U.S. forces in Iraq and in other causes. In 2013, the **al-Nusra Front** emerged as the best-known militant Salafi group. While their military experience and fearless resistance to government forces makes them an important element in the constellation of opposition forces, their puritanical agenda alienates large swaths of Syrian society, including **Christians**, **Druzes**, and **Alawis**, as well as moderate **Sunni** Muslims.

SALAMIYYA. Small town located about halfway between **Homs** and **Hama** on the margins of cultivated land and the steppe. In **Islamic** times, lesser members of the **Abbasid family** settled there, but its historical importance was as the site of decisive developments in the history of **Isma`ili Shi`ism**, for which it was a center of religious leadership and propaganda starting in the 9th century. The founder of the **Fatimid dynasty**, Ubayd Allah, was born there and instituted some changes in doctrine, which precipitated a split among Isma`ilis and the secession of a faction that became the **Qarmatis**. After Ubayd Allah's departure for North Africa, Salamiyya became the object of struggles among a succession of tribal chieftains and princes of Homs and Hama. In the early **Ottoman** era, it was abandoned. During the mid-19th century, Istanbul allowed Isma`ilis from the **Jabal Ansariyya** to resettle it as part of a campaign to extend control over the steppe. These descendants of the **Nizari** branch of Isma`ili Shi`ism have prospered by developing the area's **agricultural** potential. In addition, they have culti-

vated strong ties with the spiritual leaders of the Nizaris, the Agha Khans, one of whom is buried in a mausoleum there. The town's population has grown to approximately 100,000.

SALJUK DYNASTY. A **Turkish** clan from Central Asia. In 1055, they became the effective power behind the **Abbasid caliphate**. The Saljuk chiefs then took the title of sultan. They opened the way for the mass migration of Turkish nomads into the central lands of the Middle East and laid the foundations for nearly nine centuries of Turkish political and military preeminence in Syria. They first entered northern Syria in 1071, seized **Damascus** in 1078, occupied **Aleppo** in 1086, and drove the **Fatimids** out of the Syrian interior altogether. Unified Saljuk rule lasted but a few years, as after 1092 it quickly fragmented among regional domains divided between various princes, who, in turn, lost effective power to their tutors or **Atabegs** by the early 12th century. In **Iran** and Asia Minor, Saljuk power lasted until the **Mongol** conquests of the early 1200s.

SAN REMO AGREEMENT. In the diplomatic aftermath of **World War I**, **Great Britain** and **France** reached a preliminary accord regarding the disposition of **Ottoman** territories and resources before formally ending the war in a peace treaty. This accord, signed at San Remo, Italy, on 24 April 1920, included a joint Anglo–French approach to Ottoman Arab lands that they had occupied during the war. They agreed to grant France a mandate over Syria and **Lebanon**, while Britain received mandates over **Palestine** and **Iraq**. Three months later, France enforced its claim to Syria by invading the country and ousting the government of **Amir Faysal**.

SARRAJ, ABD AL-HAMID AL- (1925–). Born in **Hama**, Sarraj was part of the growing leftist trend in the officer corps during the 1950s. He served in the national gendarmerie in the **French Mandate** era and then fought alongside other volunteers in the **Palestine War of 1948**. Thereafter, he attracted the favorable attention of **Adib al-Shishakli**. In 1954, after Shishakli's fall, he and other officers plotted against the pro-Western cabinet of **Sabri al-Asali**, but the effort was detected in the planning stages, and Sarraj was sent to **France** as an assistant to the military attaché.

Sarraj was rehabilitated the following year and, in March 1955, promoted to head of Military Intelligence, in which capacity he presided over the investigation into the April 1955 assassination of Colonel **Adnan al-Malki**, a role that made Sarraj a well-known figure. This task involved the discovery of conspiracies supposedly hatched by **Iraq**, the **Syrian Social National Party**, and Western governments to derail Syria's neutralist stance. Sarraj gained further stature when he uncovered the **Conspiracy of 1956** to over-

throw the Syrian government. In March 1957, pro-Western officers tried to transfer him to an innocuous post, but his solid backing among junior officers allowed him to resist the order. Two months later, Sarraj formed a Revolutionary Command Council of army officers and civilian politicians to keep Syria on its neutral course in **foreign policy**. Along with Major General **Afif al-Bizri**, he was now the leading figure in the Syrian military, which, since 1949, had dominated the country's politics.

Sarraj favored the 1958 merger with **Egypt** to form the **United Arab Republic (UAR)**, in which he rose to minister of interior, thus acquiring authority over Syria's **security forces**. In this capacity, he became notorious for introducing police state measures to suppress dissent. In September 1960, Gamal Abd al-Nasser appointed him president of the Syrian Provincial Council, effectively the most powerful position for a Syrian in the UAR. In August of the following year, however, Nasser removed him from that post to assume the more ceremonial office of vice president of the UAR. Sarraj resigned on 26 September 1961, two days before the coup that took Syria out of the UAR. The **secessionist regime** arrested him in early October, but, in May 1962, he escaped from a military hospital and made his way to Egypt, where he has lived ever since.

SAUDI ARABIA. Even though Syria is a republic and Saudi Arabia is a monarchy, they have usually maintained good relations because of their need to balance pressures from the perennial powers in Arab politics, namely **Egypt** and **Iraq**. During the **French Mandate**, Saudi Arabia's king, Abd al-Aziz ibn Saud, opposed **Hashemite** influence in Syria through his political ally, **Shukri al-Quwwatli**. Ibn Saud's primary concern was to block any move to transform Syria into a monarchy under Amir Abdallah, the ruler of **Transjordan**, or either of his brothers, **Faysal** and **Ali**. The Saudi-Hashemite rivalry has its roots in their struggle for supremacy in Arabia during the 1920s, when the Saudis attacked and defeated the Hashemite kingdom of the Hijaz in 1925. Saudi opposition to Hashemite interests continued during Syria's first years of independence, when both **Jordan** and **Iraq** supported Syrian politicians inclined to form a union with either of those countries. In the inter-Arab struggle for paramount influence in Syria, Saudi Arabia usually cooperated with Egypt against Iraq and Jordan.

Syrian-Saudi relations became strained under the **United Arab Republic** and the first two **Ba'th Party** regimes, which championed the cause of revolution in the Arab world against all forces of "reaction," especially pro-Western monarchies. When **Hafiz al-Asad** came to power in 1970, he cultivated friendlier relations and, in return, received large amounts of Saudi financial aid, but relations again became strained during the 1980s because of Syria's support for **Iran** in its war against Iraq. Ties improved in 1990 and 1991, when Asad gave strong support to Saudi Arabia in the wake of Iraq's

invasion of Kuwait. In the 1990s, the conservative monarchy and the Ba`th Party regime consistently coordinated positions on various regional issues, for instance, the sanctions against Iraq and peace talks with **Israel**. They closed a notable gap from the 1980s when Syria helped mend the rift between the Saudis and Iran's Islamic Republic.

Syrian president **Bashar al-Asad** continued his father's policy of frequent consultation with the Saudis on such urgent regional events as the U.S. invasion of Iraq and initiatives to resolve the **Palestinian**–Israeli conflict. **Lebanon**, however, became a deeply divisive issue. This first became apparent in the aftermath of the 2005 assassination of former Lebanese prime minister **Rafiq al-Hariri**, who was personally close to members of the Saudi royal **family**. Amid mounting international pressure to evacuate Syrian forces from Lebanon, Saudi Arabia's King Abdallah issued an ultimatum to **Damascus**: Asad must either immediately withdraw Syrian troops from the country or risk irreparable damage in bilateral relations. The warning exemplified regional condemnation of Syria's interference in Lebanon and contributed to Asad's swift withdrawal of military and intelligence forces from Beirut. Syrian meddling in Lebanese affairs continued to be a problem, however, and, in March 2008, King Abdallah recalled his ambassador. The leader accused Damascus of interfering in Lebanon's elections. A new envoy was not appointed until July 2009, in a move to lead Syria out of Western-imposed isolation and rekindle Syrian–Saudi cooperation on issues involving Lebanon, Iraq, and Israel. Saudi alarm at rising Iranian influence helped spur King Abdallah's visit to Damascus in October 2009. He and Asad engaged in talks intended to strengthen political ties and economic cooperation.

In 2010, King Abdallah and President Asad attended a summit in Lebanon aimed at mitigating potential backlash against indictments from the Special Tribunal for Lebanon, which was pursuing the perpetrators of Hariri's assassination. As tensions mounted in Beirut, officials sought to preempt Lebanese retribution should the **United Nations** implicate members of **Hizballah**. With both leaders seeking to avoid political fallout and reassert influence in Lebanon, Abdallah and Asad tried to resolve disputes among Lebanese government officials and opposition representatives. Both leaders urged Lebanese politicians to refrain from violence and instead settle disputes in a manner conducive for national stability. Asad and Abdallah met with Lebanese president Michel Suleiman to negotiate details for an agreement between rival political factions in the wake of the Special Tribunal disclosing its findings.

During the **Syrian Uprising**, Saudi Arabia has given strong backing to the largely **Sunni** Muslim opposition. The Saudis joined **Qatar** to provide rebels based in **Turkey** with funds to purchase arms. Saudi diplomats have also

worked behind the scenes to push factions they support to form a unified opposition and advocated for equipping rebels with arms in their struggle to overthrow the Asad regime. *See also* FOREIGN POLICY.

SAYF, RIYAD AL- (1946–). A **Damascus** businessman and independent member of the People's Assembly elected in 1994. Sayf initially focused on efforts to expand the domain of the private commercial sector in Syria's state-dominated **economy**. He rose to prominence in the first year of **Bashar al-Asad's** rule as a leading establishment voice in the **civil society** movement for ending the state of emergency and restoring democracy. He founded the Movement for Social Peace in a direct challenge to the **Ba'th Party** monopoly on political organization. In particular, he declared the failure of socialist policies to advance Syria's economic fortunes. During the brief spell of political relaxation in Asad's early months in office, the **Damascus Spring**, Sayf was a popular figure for using his platform in parliament to criticize official **corruption**. He called for an investigation into the **Makhluf family's** monopoly on the national telephone system. When the regime decided to suppress the reform movement in late summer 2001, the authorities arrested Sayf for holding an unauthorized meeting to protest the arrest of another activist, **Riyad al-Turk**. Sayf's trial attracted observers from several European countries and the **United States**. He defended his political activities and statements as within the bounds of a parliamentary deputy. Nevertheless, in April 2002, a court sentenced him to a five-year sentence for subverting the **constitution**.

Upon his release from prison in 2006, Sayf and family members were harassed and threatened multiple times by police and **security forces**. He was banned from traveling outside the country despite his urgent medical condition. In 2008, he was arrested again for attempting to revive the **Damascus Declaration for National Democratic Change**, of which he was the chief organizer. In the early stages of the **Syrian Uprising**, he joined the **Syrian National Council** in seeking the overthrow of the Asad regime. In retaliation, security forces detained and beat him. In July 2012, the government allowed Sayf to leave the country to seek medical treatment in Germany. From the safety of exile, he was instrumental in the formation of an umbrella opposition group, the **National Coalition of Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces**, designed to bring together the many **Local Coordination Committees** inside Syria and the opposition forces outside the country. He was selected to serve as one of the coalition's two vice presidents.

SAYYADI, ABU AL-HUDA AL- (1850–1909). Religious shaykh who served as adviser to Sultan **Abdulhamid II** and supported the sultan's claim to the **caliphate**. Sayyadi came from a **family** known as leaders of a small

branch of the Rifa'iyya **Sufi** order near **Aleppo**. He traveled to Istanbul, where he earned a reputation for his singing of Sufi chants and gained entrance to Abdulhamid's entourage. The sultan then made him the head of all Rifa'iyya branches in the **Ottoman Empire's** Arab provinces. This order had numerous lodges in Syria and **Iraq** and provided a network that channeled propaganda in favor of the sultan to dozens of towns and villages. Sayyadi fabricated genealogies to incorporate local Sufi orders into the Rifa'iyya order and grant the status of **ashraf** to minor Sufi sheikhs. He also distributed posts, stipends, and medals to his clients. As a result, many who worked in Syrian religious institutions depended on his patronage. Sayyadi also composed many books that supported Abdulhamid's claim to the caliphate and encouraged Muslims to support their ruler.

SECESSIONIST REGIME. Term that refers to the series of short-lived governments that emerged following Syria's September 1961 withdrawal from the **United Arab Republic (UAR)**. Seven cabinets came and went in 17 months of extraordinary instability. The first government restored parliamentary rule and, in December, held national elections that returned many of the conservative politicians who had dominated politics in the early years of independence. **Khalid al-Azm** won the largest share of votes for his stands in favor of democracy and against union with **Egypt**. On the other hand, **Salah al-Din al-Bitar** and other candidates of the **Ba'th Party** who had brought about the union with Egypt were defeated. Yet, **Akram al-Hawrani**, a Ba'thist leader who had criticized UAR policies, and his coalition partners did well. In the new government, **People's Party** leaders **Ma'ruf al-Dawalibi** became prime minister and **Nazim al-Qudsi** president. The conservative assembly rescinded the July 1961 **Socialist Decrees** that had nationalized large companies. It also sought to restore civilian authority.

Army officers, however, had grown accustomed to dictating to politicians, and between 28 March and 2 April 1962, three separate attempts at military coups were made. The first was by **Abd al-Karim al-Nahlawi**, who opposed any return to a more liberal regime. Three days later, a group of Nasserist and Ba'thist officers in **Homs** made a clumsy bid for power. Finally, Nasserist officers in **Aleppo** attempted a coup on 2 April. Aside from opposing the restoration of full civilian authority, the officers favored the continuation of **land reform** and the Socialist Decrees. In the wake of these interventions, Dawalibi resigned, Qudsi declared the dissolution of the elected assembly, and **Bashir al-Azma** formed a more progressive cabinet that lasted until September. The Azma government partially restored socialist measures that Dawalibi had rescinded. In September, Qudsi consulted with the Syrian Army command concerning a cabinet change because of Azma's weakness as prime minister. The army agreed to the appointment of Azm and, to ensure the progressive reforms, the retention of Azma as deputy prime minister.

Azm continued with gradual implementation of land reform, but his desire to restore a fully democratic government alarmed the officers. His government lasted until the **March 8, 1963 Coup** that ended the secessionist regime and brought the Ba`th Party to power.

SECURITY FORCES. One of the mainstays of **Ba`th Party** power since 1963 has been a network of special security units, military intelligence forces, and civilian intelligence agencies that track, intimidate, and suppress groups and individuals critical of the government. Such forces, known in Arabic as *mukhabarat*, or information services, have become crucial elements for the stability of most Arab regimes. The security forces are responsible for Syria's abysmal **human rights** record, which includes detention without trial and torture. State Security, also called the General Security Directorate, watches domestic political activity in the universities; Political Security tracks members of political parties; and the Bureau of National Security collects information from Ba`th Party members distributed throughout the country. Military Intelligence is one of the two most powerful agencies, and for years it had a major role in managing Syria's affairs in **Lebanon**. Inside the country, its Palestine Branch maintains surveillance on **Palestinian** camps and organizations. Finally, Air Force Intelligence is a separate entity that seems to specialize in operations abroad. The various military units run their own interrogation centers, where torture is routinely used on detainees.

In addition to these information-collecting bodies, the regime of **Hafiz al-Asad** created special military units that combine intelligence and security functions. The leadership and personnel of these units consist of men whose loyalty to the regime stems from **family** connection or sectarian, **Alawi**, affinity. The Special Forces, numbering between 10,000 and 15,000, played a key role in suppressing the protests and insurrection of the late 1970s and early 1980s. This unit also had a fearful presence in northern Lebanon, carrying out abductions and even executions. A second special military force, the Defense Brigades, was, for more than a decade, the chief institutional prop for **Rif`at al-Asad**. Under his command, the Defense Brigades guarded against coups d'état, but after Rif`at's disgrace in the mid-1980s, President Asad disbanded them. The Presidential Guard (also known as the Republican Guard) is responsible for the head of state's security. In the early 1990s, it served as a power base for **Basil al-Asad**, Hafiz al-Asad's older son who died in a 1994 automobile accident.

Since the eruption of the **Syrian Uprising** in March 2011, the security forces have been the instrument of suppression readily at hand for the government's punishing response to demonstrations. Security officers have fired on demonstrators, rounded up thousands of protesters, and arrested activists. The regime's reliance on the security forces at moments of crisis

has been a matter of routine for decades, but this time they have been unable to contain the spread of public protest in spite of the brutal measures undertaken to intimidate ordinary Syrians. When armed rebel factions sprout up, the government turns to the regular army to bolster its position at the same time that security forces continue to play a role in the regime's efforts to crush the opposition. They seem destined to remain part of the political struggle in Syria as long as the Asad regime holds on to power.

SELIM I (r. 1512–1529). The **Ottoman** conqueror of Syria (1516) and **Egypt** (1517). Selim I's army of **janissaries** routed the **Mamluks** at **Marj Dabiq**, near **Aleppo**, on 24 August 1516. As sultan, Selim led his forces south and the Mamluks fled to Egypt, leaving **Damascus** to fall without a struggle one month later. On 23 January 1517, Ottoman forces easily defeated the Mamluks outside Cairo, thereby ending the Mamluk sultanate. The victorious sultan then organized Ottoman administration of Syria. He appointed a governor over Aleppo and its districts, while he designated a Mamluk to preside over Damascus and extensive portions of central and southern Syria. In 1519, he created a new province centered on Tripoli, thereby reducing the scope of the province of Damascus.

SHA'BAN, BUTHAYNA (1953–). Political and media adviser to President **Bashar al-Asad**. Sha'ban attended the University of **Damascus** before pursuing a Ph.D. and master's degree in English **literature** from Warwick University, England. She was appointed minister of expatriates in 2003, after serving as director of the Media Department in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In 2008, she resigned from her cabinet position to become a political and media adviser for President Asad. As the official spokesperson for the Asad regime, Sha'ban has played a major public role during the **Syrian Uprising**. She was the first to announce a change in government response toward demonstrations in early May 2011. She was also responsible for introducing the idea of a national dialogue between civilians and government officials. Sha'ban has published an extensive collection of papers on feminism in the Middle East and campaigned for the promotion of **women's** rights.

SHABIHA. The word for “ghost” in Arabic, in the 1970s, the term came to refer to thugs or criminal gangs. A militia nicknamed the Shabiha emerged in the 1970s and gained notoriety in the 1990s by participating in weapon and drug smuggling rings near the port city of **Latakia**. Membership in the Shabiha militia is comprised of Syria's **minority Alawi** sect. During the **Syrian Uprising**, Shabiha units loyal to President **Bashar al-Asad** have

been accused of beating, killing, and mutilating protesters as part of a broader campaign of intimidation aimed at dissuading dissidents from antiregime activity.

SHAHBANDAR, ABD AL-RAHMAN (1880–1940). A prominent Syrian nationalist during the **French Mandate**. Shahbandar was a leading opponent of compromise with **French** authority. His devotion to **Arab nationalism** dated to the days of the **Committee of Union and Progress** and its “Turkification” policies. He supported the **Arab Revolt** during **World War I** and briefly headed the foreign ministry under **Amir Faysal**. When France occupied Syria in July 1920, he fled the country. Shahbandar returned in 1921 and organized the **Iron Hand Society** to agitate against French rule. In April 1922, the French arrested him and other Iron Hand leaders for incitement against their rule. The arrests triggered several days of demonstrations and bloody confrontation between protesters and French forces in **Damascus**. Nonetheless, the French tried Shahbandar for subversive activities and sentenced him to 20 years. After he served a year and a half of his sentence, the French sent him into exile, where he joined the activities of the **Syrian–Palestine Congress**, based in Cairo. The French allowed him to return to Syria in 1924. The following year, Shahbandar guided the formation of Syria’s first nationalist party, the **People’s Party**. He then helped organize the spread of the **Great Revolt** from **Jabal Druze** to the rest of Syria. He eluded French authorities and moved to Jabal Druze for the duration of the uprising. There, he and **Sultan al-Atrash** formed a provisional government. When the revolt collapsed in 1927, Shahbandar fled to **Transjordan**, and from there to **Egypt**.

In 1937, a French amnesty allowed Shahbandar to return from exile, and he directed his supporters to oppose the **Franco–Syrian Treaty** on the grounds that it granted France privileges that detracted from Syrian sovereignty. He also directed a political campaign to discredit the **National Bloc** government and Prime Minister **Jamil Mardam**. During **World War II**, the French considered cooperating with Shahbandar because of his opposition to the National Bloc and support for him from **Great Britain** and the **Hashemites**, but, in June 1940, he was assassinated. The French accused several prominent National Bloc figures, including Jamil Mardam and **Sa’dallah al-Jabiri**, of plotting the murder, and they fled to **Iraq**. While Shahbandar was one of Syria’s most popular leaders, he never built up an organization that would perpetuate his political legacy.

SHAHRUR, MUHAMMAD (1938–). Author of a modernist interpretation of the Qur’an that generated keen interest and sharp controversy throughout the Arab world. Shahrur’s *The Book and the Qur’an: A Contemporary Read-*

ing (1990) is a long, somewhat rambling meditation based in part on his interest in modern linguistics theory. He did not acquire a traditional or even modern **education** in **Islamic** sciences. Rather, he studied civil engineering in the Soviet Union and Ireland, and then became a professor at **Damascus** University and worked in a private firm.

In his controversial book, Shahrur sets out to challenge received ideas about the Qur'an and advances what he hopes is a more objective and scientific understanding of its meaning. His approach is in line with modernist efforts to reinterpret the Qur'an in the light of current historical circumstances rather than accepting the views of earlier Muslims as final and complete. He explicates a relative conception of knowledge with reference to paradigm shifts in the sciences in modern times and asserts that just as scientific notions about the natural world are susceptible to revision, so are the positions of Muslims on the meaning of the Qur'an. Shahrur applies this relativist epistemology to the sensitive issue of **women's** status and contends that their exclusion from judgeships and positions of executive authority rests on a historically conditioned reading of the Qur'an, not its eternal meaning.

In other writings, Shahrur states that it is imperative to bring the details of Islamic morality and law (**shari'a**) into accord with what he believes to be Islam's general principles, for instance, justice and the free exchange of ideas. At the same time, he retains a believer's certainty that some moral issues are not subject to compromise. Through his sensitivity to historical context and restriction of eternal rules to those explicitly declared in the Qur'an, Shahrur represents a liberal religious attitude that many Syrian Muslims with modern education find appealing.

SHARA', FARUQ AL- (1938–). Prominent adviser on **foreign policy** to presidents **Hafiz al-Asad** and **Bashar al-Asad**. Shara' is from **Dar'a**, a town near the **Jordanian** border. He attended **Damascus** University and studied English **literature**. In the late 1970s, he was Syria's ambassador to Italy, and he then reached a high post in the foreign ministry in 1980, before becoming foreign minister in 1984 to replace **Abd al-Halim al-Khaddam**. Shara' became familiar to the Western press as head of the Syrian delegation to the 1991 **Madrid Conference**. Throughout the decade, he frequently spoke on behalf of President Hafiz al-Asad to Arab and Western audiences. In September 1999, he met U.S. president Bill Clinton in Washington to hammer out a formula for resuming peace talks with **Israel** after a three-year hiatus. After recovering from heart surgery, he led the Syrian team at the 1999–2000 round of peace talks with Israel held in the **United States** and was the highest-ranking official of the Syrian government to ever meet an Israeli leader, Prime Minister Ehud Barak. Shara' retained his post in the transition to the Bashar al-Asad era and represented continuity in the country's key positions on foreign policy. He resigned the foreign ministry portfolio in

2006 to become honorary vice president of Syria. During the **Syrian Uprising**, a 2012 Arab League peace plan under consideration at the **United Nations** for a transitional government implied that Shara' would serve as interim president, but **Russia** vetoed the proposal.

SHARI'A. The Arabic term for **Islamic** law, shari'a has been an integral part of Syrian society for more than 1,000 years. In Islamic legal theory, there are four sources for Islamic law: (1) the Qur'an, which, in Muslim belief, is the word of God; (2) the Sunna, or oral traditions of the Prophet Muhammad; (3) the consensus of scholarly opinion; and (4) analogical reasoning. Throughout the Islamic period, experts in Islamic law have been drawn from the **ulama** to serve as judges (sing. *qadi*) in religious courts and as jurisconsults (sing. *mufti*) to issue legal opinions. Muslim rulers from the early **caliphate** to the **Ottoman** dynasty legitimized their rule by claiming to abide by and enforce the shari'a.

The status of religious law began to weaken during the **Tanzimat** era of Ottoman history with the introduction of secular legal codes. The first reaction to the tide of secularism issued from the **Salafiyya** movement, whose partisans argued for a reinterpretation of shari'a to demonstrate its relevance to the Ottoman project of modernization. Under the **French Mandate**, authorities initially refrained from tampering with the religious courts' remaining jurisdiction over personal status, but, in 1928, a French proposal to call for religious equality in a draft **constitution** caused an uproar, and the matter had to be abandoned.

On the whole, the shari'a emerged from the colonial period unscathed, but soon after independence, Syria enacted a new civil code that represented a small step away from religious law. On the other hand, the 1953 Law of Personal Status reaffirmed the shari'a's authority over marriage, divorce, and other family matters among Muslims. The place of the shari'a in Syrian society came to the fore in the 1970s and early 1980s, when the **Muslim Brotherhood** led popular demonstrations and a militant insurrection to overthrow the secular **Ba'th Party** regime to install an Islamic state that would reestablish the centrality of Islamic law in the **legal system**. The Syrian government suppressed the uprising in 1982, and since that time, the confined role of the shari'a in public life has not been challenged.

SHARIF HUSAYN. See HUSAYN IBN ALI, SHARIF (c. 1853–1931).

SHEPHERDSTOWN. This small American town in West Virginia hosted an intensive phase in the **Syrian–Israeli peace talks** on 3–10 January 2000. They were the first negotiations between the perennial adversaries since a wave of **Palestinian** suicide bombings in **Israel** in February and March

1996, and Syria's refusal to condemn them led Israel to suspend contacts. There followed a three-year freeze while Benjamin Netanyahu was the Israeli prime minister. Then, in May 1999, Ehud Barak defeated Netanyahu in national elections, and the **United States** helped bring the two sides together with the hope of achieving a peace settlement. Prior to the talks, Israeli prime minister Ehud Barak and Syrian foreign minister **Faruq al-Shara'** met in Washington. During eight days at Shepherdstown, President Bill Clinton participated on five separate occasions, and Secretary of State Madeleine Albright spent the entire time with the parties in a strong effort to culminate a deal. Both sides formed special committees to discuss borders, **water**, security, and diplomatic relations, and while the substance of the talks was supposed to be secret, leaks indicated that the atmosphere was positive. Barak, however, faced a difficult political climate back home because of his narrow majority in the Israeli parliament and popular mistrust of Syria. Likewise, the **Damascus** leadership faced domestic unrest, and there were reports that when the talks were announced in December, the authorities arrested several hundred **Islamic fundamentalist** and leftist figures in the major cities to curtail criticism.

When the talks concluded, it was expected that a second round would begin on 19 January, but a secret American draft agreement leaked out. It embarrassed the Syrians because it indicated that Damascus had yielded on certain issues without gaining Israel's agreement on borders. Syrian president **Hafiz al-Asad** then declared that he would not send Shara' back unless Israel publicly declared that it would withdraw to the 4 June 1967 lines. American efforts to restart the talks failed when Clinton traveled to Geneva to meet Asad in March with new proposals that the Syrian president considered unacceptable. Asad died just three months later, and, in September 2000, a new Palestinian uprising erupted. In retrospect, the Shepherdstown talks represented the high-water mark of diplomatic efforts dating to the 1991 **Madrid Conference**.

SHI'Ī. The second-largest Muslim sect after the **Sunnis**, the Shi'is are actually divided into several subsects, including the following communities found in Syria: the Twelvers or Imamis, **Isma'ilis**, **Alawis**, and **Nizaris**. The **Druze religion** is an offshoot of Isma'ili Shi'ism. The historical origins of Shi'ism go back to the first generation of **Islam** when differences arose concerning the rightful claimant to the **caliphate**. A party of Muslims supported the claims of the Prophet Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law, **Ali ibn Abi Talib**, but most Muslims backed other candidates as the first three caliphs. Ali's supporters became known as the "Party of Ali," or *shi'at Ali* in Arabic, hence the term *Shi'ī*. Ali gained the caliphate in 656, but his standing was challenged, and he was ultimately assassinated in 661. Loyalty to Ali then devolved to his descendants, who were considered the **imams**, the legit-

imate religious and political leaders of the community. About a century after his death, schisms developed among the Shi'is when they disagreed on the identity of the imam. The various Shi'i sects that evolved during the 8th and 9th centuries arose on the basis of loyalty to different descendants of Ali. *See also* FATIMID DYNASTY; QARMATI; SHI'ITIZATION.

SHIHABI, HIKMAT AL- (1931–2013). One of the most important military figures in **Hafiz al-Asad's** regime. Shihabi was chief of staff of the **armed forces** from 1973 until 1998. He was a **Sunni** Muslim and served the regime in capacities that indicated the confidence and trust that President Asad placed in him. After the **October 1973 War**, he participated in negotiations with the **United States** to achieve a disengagement accord with **Israel** on the **Golan Heights**. During the fall 1983 illness of President Asad, Shihabi was part of a committee that managed national affairs while the president recuperated. In December 1994 and June 1995, he represented Syria in security talks with Israeli counterparts in Washington. At the time, Asad's dispatch of his chief of staff signaled to the Israelis and the Americans his serious intention to pursue the negotiations. The phase of **Syrian–Israeli peace talks** in which Shihabi participated made little progress in bridging the gap between the Israeli and Syrian positions on the security components of a peace treaty. He retired in 1998 due to his opposition to **Bashar al-Asad's** eventual succession. Shortly before Hafiz al-Asad's death in June 2000, Shihabi traveled to the United States amid rumors that he would face prosecution for **corruption** schemes. He returned to **Damascus** the following month, probably after receiving word that he would not face any charges. He spent the remainder of his life in Syria, where he died in 2013.

SHI'ITIZATION. This term refers to a **Shi'i** missionary movement that began in 2007 and converted **Sunni** Muslims to Shi'ism. Shi'itization was a product of **Hizballah's** rising popularity, Syria's growing ties with **Iran**, and generous financial support from Iranian religious figures for restoration projects and religious schools. In addition, the Syrian government countenanced Shi'i missionary activities. The phenomenon proved short-lived given the revival of sectarianism in the **Syrian Uprising** and the resurgence of Sunni animosity toward Shi'is.

SHISHAKLI, ADIB AL- (1909–1964). Colonel who launched the third military coup of 1949 to thwart any chance of union with **Iraq**. Shishakli was born in **Hama** to a **family** of rural tax collectors that had become prominent in the early 1800s. He was a longtime associate of his fellow townsman, **Akram al-Hawrani**. In the 1930s, Shishakli was attracted to the **Syrian Social National Party**. He played a minor part in **Husni al-Za'im's** coup of

March 1949, but was then forced to retire. **Sami al-Hinnawi** reinstated him, and he then plotted with Hawrani to overthrow Hinnawi. When Shishakli deposed Hinnawi on 19 December 1949, he designated civilian politicians to govern Syria. The Constituent Assembly elected under Hinnawi continued to meet; **Khalid al-Azm** headed a civilian government; and Shishakli retained his post as deputy chief of staff, preferring to wield effective power from behind the scenes.

Shishakli moved to center stage on 28 November 1951, when he removed the **People's Party** from government and arrested its leaders. This event led to the resignation of President **Hashim al-Atasi** and Shishakli's promotion of his associate, Colonel **Fawzi Silu**, as head of state. Shishakli then took a series of steps to shore up his authority. First, he mobilized popular support by establishing the Arab Liberation Movement in August 1952. The movement endorsed improving the standing of **women, land reform**, and more progressive labor laws. He built up the **armed forces**, promoted younger officers with training in Western countries, and briefly unified its higher ranks of the armed forces under his control. He also asserted state authority over private and foreign schools. To dampen political opposition, Shishakli closed down political parties and banned members of the civil service and **trade unions** from political activity.

In July 1953, Shishakli conducted a referendum to approve a new **constitution** under which he was elected president and formed a cabinet of nonentities. That same month, his opponents gathered in **Homs** to plot a revolt that would begin in **Jabal Druze** and include demonstrations in major cities. Iraq also connived at Shishakli's downfall because of his suppression of the People's Party (the pro-Iraqi party) and his alignment with **Saudi Arabia** and **Egypt**. On 25 February 1954, military units in **Aleppo, Dayr al-Zur, Hama, Homs, and Latakia** mutinied and called for Shishakli to step down. He resigned and departed for Beirut, and left for Saudi Arabia two days later. In 1960, he moved to **Brazil**, where a **Druze** gunman assassinated him on 27 September 1964.

SIBA'I, MUSTAFA AL- (1915–1964). Head of the **Muslim Brotherhood** in Syria from 1946 until 1957, professor of **Islamic law (shari'a)**, and dean of **Damascus University's Law Faculty**. Siba'i's **family** was well-known in **Homs** for its association with religious learning. Siba'i went to **Egypt** in the early 1930s to study at its prestigious college of Islamic learning, the Azhar. While in Cairo, he joined the Muslim Brotherhood and participated in anti-British activities that led to his arrest and imprisonment. He returned to Homs in 1941 and established an activist religious group called Muhammad's Youth, modeled on the Muslim Brotherhood. He was instrumental in the 1946 foundation of the Muslim Brotherhood's Syrian branch and became its leader. In addition to his political and religious activism, Siba'i wrote

several works that gained influence with **Islamic fundamentalists**. In *Islamic Socialism* (1960), he argues that Islam possesses a distinctive economic system that is akin to Western types of socialism. According to Siba'i, Islamic socialism gives the state a guiding role through nationalization of public services.

Siba'i led the Muslim Brotherhood during its heyday of involvement in Syrian politics, between independence and **Adib al-Shishakli's** ban on the movement in 1952. He formed the Islamic Socialist Front in 1949 to contend in elections to the Constituent Assembly, and it gained four seats, including one for Siba'i. In the assembly, he was the spokesman for Syrians who favored an article stipulating that Islam would be the state **religion**. Sharp debate in the assembly led to a compromise formula, which stated that the president must be a Muslim and that legislation should be derived from Islamic law. Siba'i remained an outspoken opponent of secular and leftist tendencies and a supporter of a neutralist foreign policy until poor health forced him to retire from politics in 1957.

SILU, FAWZI (1905–1972). Prominent figure in **Adib al-Shishakli's** regime. Silu had a long career in the military, having joined the **Troupes Spéciales du Levant** in 1924. He was the first chief of the **Homs** Military Academy in independent Syria and led its delegation at the **Armistice of 1949** talks. After Shishakli seized power in December 1949, he forced Silu on Prime Minister **Nazim al-Qudsi** as minister of defense to act as the army's man in the cabinet. When Shishakli established a military dictatorship in December 1951, he gave Silu full executive and legislative powers. Silu was no more than a figurehead as Shishakli set about dismantling the institutions of democratic government. Between June 1952 and July 1953, Silu headed a cabinet, but when Shishakli assumed the presidency, he forced the colonel to retire. A few months later, Colonel Silu left Syria and moved to **Saudi Arabia**.

SOCIALIST DECREES. In July 1961, **United Arab Republic (UAR)** president Gamal Abd al-Nasser announced a set of laws that nationalized **banks**, insurance companies, and three large **industrial** companies. Because of their unpopularity, the decrees are often cited as a factor in contributing to Syria's secession from the UAR two months later. During the tumultuous 18 months following the secession, conservative politicians tried to repeal or at least dilute these measures. As it turned out, they foreshadowed more sweeping measures passed and implemented by the **Ba'th Party** regimes of the 1960s.

SOVIET UNION (USSR). *See* RUSSIA.

SUFISM. This mystical aspect of Muslim religious practice and belief developed in early **Islamic** times from a movement for greater asceticism and piety. Sufism has long been a widespread phenomenon in all Muslim lands, including Syria. Followers of the mystical way are known as Sufis. Sufism concentrates on the individual believer's relationship with Allah, the Arabic word for God. Its central concept is that through moral purification and rigorous devotional practice, the believer draws closer to Allah and might eventually attain a mystical union with Him. The characteristic practice of Sufism is *dhikr*, the ceremonial remembrance of Allah by an individual or by a group of mystics.

In the 11th century, mystical brotherhoods or Sufi orders (sing. *tariqa*) formed on the basis of a particular Sufi master's practices and teachings. Groups of Sufis gathered at convents called *zawiyas*, which became widespread in Syrian towns during the 11th and 12th centuries under the patronage of the **Atabegs** and the **Ayyubid dynasty**. The **Mamluk** sultans added more endowments (sing. **waqf**) for these Sufi convents. The best-known early Sufi orders in Syria were the Rifa'iyya and Qadiriyya orders, which remained popular well into the 20th century. The Suhrawardiyya and Shadhiyya orders also had wide followings in medieval times.

The **Ottoman** era saw the spread of two more Sufi orders: the Khalwatiyya and Naqshbandiyya. In the 19th century, the latter order became the vanguard of a movement to make Sufi practices more rigorously conform to the prescriptions of Islamic law (**shari'a**). This shari'a-minded Sufism took root most firmly in **Damascus**, particularly following the arrival of the renowned peripatetic Shaykh Khalid al-Naqshbandi (1780–1827). He founded a branch of the order known as the Mujaddidiyya-Naqshbandiyya, which also gained adherents among high-ranking Ottoman officials in Istanbul. Later in the 19th century, this reformist brand of Sufism attracted more **ulama** and influenced the early stages of the **Salafiyya** reform movement. In the same period, Sultan **Abdulhamid II** and his Syrian adviser, **Abu al-Huda al-Sayyadi**, supported Sufi orders that followed traditional ways, for example, the Rifa'iyya.

During the 20th century, Islamic reform groups like the **Muslim Brotherhood** and secular social movements attracted much of the urban population that historically associated with Sufi orders. Nonetheless, the orders continued to provide religious guidance and a milieu for spiritual discipline. The Naqshbandiyya and Rifa'iyya reportedly retained the largest followings, and in the early years of the 21st century, new interpretations of Sufism gained popularity.

SULAYMAN, BAHJAT. After initially participating in a failed coup d'état in the 1980s, Sulayman regained political standing in 2000 for helping secure the succession of **Bashar al-Asad** as president. In reward for his support, the

general was named chief of internal **security forces** and became an influential presidential adviser in President Asad's political circle. Sulayman's responsibilities included censoring intellectuals, journalists, activists, and artists. He employed threats, intimidation, and detentions to extract information and confessions from suspected dissidents. In 2005, Sulayman was removed from his post shortly before being identified as a suspect in the assassination of former Lebanese prime minister **Rafiq al-Hariri**. He was later appointed Syrian ambassador to **Jordan**. His son Majd is a wealthy businessman and financial backer for a pro-government **newspaper**.

SULEYMAN I (r. 1520–1566). A great **Ottoman** sultan, known as Suleyman the Magnificent. Upon ascending to the throne, Suleyman I immediately faced a revolt by the **Mamluk** governor of **Damascus**, Janbardi al-Ghazali, who took over **Homs**, **Hama**, and Tripoli, but failed in his attempt to seize **Aleppo**. An Ottoman counterattack soon reconquered Tripoli and Damascus. Sultan Suleyman then appointed a **Turkish** governor for Damascus and separate governors for portions of southern Syria. Ottoman rule of Syria, then, was decisively consolidated during Suleyman's long reign.

SUNNI. The majority Muslim sect, which comprises about 70 to 75 percent of the population. In early **Islamic** history, the Sunnis were those Muslims who accepted the legitimacy of the early caliphs, supported **Mu'awiya** in his struggle against **Ali ibn Abi Talib**, and backed the **Umayyad** and **Abbasid** dynasties against various **Shi'i** movements. Sunni political power in Syria faced its most serious challenge during the 10th and 11th centuries, when the **Fatimid dynasty** of **Egypt**, the **Hamdanid dynasty** of **Aleppo**, and the **Qarmati** movement dominated most of the country. Sunni authority was restored in the late 11th century by the Saljuk dynasty, but **Nizari** strongholds survived in remote parts of Syria and challenged the Saljuks and their **Ayyubid** successors well into the 13th century. During the **Mamluk sultanate**, the last vestiges of Shi'i power were stamped out. Both the Mamluks and the **Ottoman** dynasty legitimized their rule by claiming to uphold Sunni Islam.

Sunni preeminence in Syria was firmly established by dynastic tradition, but also by the economic domination of Sunni townsmen over the rural hinterland. In the late 19th century, urban Sunnis came into possession of vast rural estates with hundreds of villages. The political elite of the late Ottoman, **French Mandate**, and early independence eras largely consisted of Sunni absentee landowners. The entry of the **armed forces** into politics through a series of military coups and then the **United Arab Republic's land reform** measures weakened the standing of the Sunni political elite. The final blow to the tradition of Sunni power was struck by the **Ba'th Party**

regimes with their concentration of religious **minorities** intent on breaking the power of landlords and promoting a secular identity for Syria. Sunni reaction to the new order took the form of protests and demonstrations in the 1960s, and then an armed insurrection in the 1970s and 1980s that was fiercely repressed by the regime of **Hafiz al-Asad**, himself an **Alawi**. During the 1990s, a partnership formed between Sunni businessmen and Alawi figures connected to the regime. The Sunni commercial and **industrial** class played a major part in **Bashar al-Asad's economic reforms** and contributed to the growing market **economy** during his rule. One of the major questions looming over the **Syrian Uprising** has been how long the Sunni business leadership based in **Damascus** and **Aleppo** will support the regime against a popular national uprising with significant sectarian overtones. *See also* RELIGION.

SUWAYDA. The capital of **Jabal Druze**. This is a city of 75,000 located 125 kilometers south of **Damascus**. The population is mixed **Druze** and **Greek Orthodox Christians** in a region that still includes **Bedouins** raising livestock. In November 2000, there was a sudden outbreak of fighting between Druzes and Bedouins in villages near Suwayda that resulted in approximately 20 deaths. The violence grew from chronic friction regarding the Bedouins' occasional trespassing on the fields of Druze cultivators. The government had to send regular army units to enforce a curfew and quell the clashes.

SYKES-PICOT AGREEMENT. Diplomatic accord of 16 May 1916 between **Great Britain** and **France** by which they agreed to the disposition of the **Ottoman Empire's** territories in the event of its defeat in **World War I**. In November 1915, formal negotiations between the two allies had commenced with a view to agreeing on spheres of influence. According to the agreement, which was kept secret for fear of antagonizing Britain's Arab allies, France was to exercise direct control over the Syrian coast and have a sphere of influence over the Syrian interior, while Britain obtained control over southern **Iraq** and a sphere of influence in southern Syria. In November 1917, the Soviet Union disclosed the terms of the Sykes-Picot Agreement, and the British sought to minimize its damaging effects by promising its Arab allies that its terms neither contradicted the **Husayn-McMahon Correspondence** nor stipulated the imposition of French rule of Syria. The post-war settlement, however, followed Sykes-Picot more closely than British promises of Arab independence.

SYRIAN AMERICANS. Before the late 1880s, few Syrians immigrated to the **United States**, but their numbers picked up in the 1890s and early 1900s. At that time, the term *Syrian* was applied to inhabitants of both Syria and **Lebanon**; therefore, U.S. immigration records did not distinguish between them, and we do not have exact figures for the number of immigrants from either region. The U.S. authorities' inexact categories included "Turkos," "Asiatic Turks," and Arabs. Almost all of the immigrants were **Christians**, male, young, and unmarried. Many of them dreamed of amassing a fortune in the New World and then going back home. The introduction of conscription in the **Ottoman Empire** in 1908 caused a spike in emigration from the Levant. Syrian immigration to the United States reached a peak of about 6,000 per year in the period before **World War I**. The prewar migration to North America was a small part of a much larger movement of more than 100,000 Syrians to Latin America, Australia, and West Africa. Once in the United States, it seems that the typical immigrant worked as an itinerant peddler or **industrial** laborer.

After the war, U.S. Congress passed legislation to establish quotas on immigrants by nationality, and Syrian entries fell to about 100 per year until the rescinding in 1965 of the Immigration Quota Act. There followed a new burst of immigration to the United States by Syrians fleeing political turmoil and seeking economic opportunity. Descendants of the first wave of immigration are thoroughly integrated into American society, in part because their ancestors wished to assimilate and thus they frequently adopted Anglicized names, for example, Thomas for Tuma. The preservation of an ethnic Syrian-American identity has depended in large measure on affiliation with Eastern churches, and distinct communities may be found among larger Arab American populations in the Detroit and Dearborn, Michigan, areas or as discrete clusters in smaller towns like Allentown and New Castle, Pennsylvania.

SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC. The official name of Syria adopted in 1961, after the dissolution of the **United Arab Republic** in September.

SYRIAN CATHOLIC. Former **Syrian Orthodox Christians** who entered communion with Rome beginning in 1783. Their historic homeland was in southern **Turkey** and northern **Iraq**, but, in the early 1920s, many Syrian Catholics immigrated to Syria. Their patriarchate is near Beirut. About 30,000 Syrian Catholics live in **Aleppo**, **Damascus**, and **Jazira**.

SYRIAN COMMUNIST PARTY (SCP). Established in Syria in 1928 as an extension of the communist Lebanese People's Party, which had been founded two years earlier. The SCP grew under the leadership of **Khalid**

Bakdash, who became party secretary in 1936. During the next three years, its membership increased to 2,000, mostly among students and intellectuals. Then, in September 1939, the **French Mandate** authorities banned the party and arrested its leaders. The SCP was again allowed to openly function from January 1941 until 1948. At the party's national congress of December 1943–January 1944, it adopted a platform that stressed national and democratic principles rather than class struggle and revolution. This position reflected Bakdash's understanding that the party lacked a large proletarian constituency and that it made sense for the party to espouse generally progressive ideas rather than a specific communist platform.

Bakdash's careful formulation of party principles to match the popular mood was sabotaged by the Soviet Union's support for the 1947 **United Nations** resolution to partition **Palestine**. Moscow's position so outraged Syrian opinion that a crowd destroyed the SCP's headquarters in **Damascus** and killed several members. Moreover, the Soviet position angered many members, and large numbers quit the party. At the same time, the Syrian government banned the SCP. Its fortunes revived, however, in the mid-1950s because of growing anti-Western sentiment.

In the campaign for national elections in 1954, party chief Khalid Bakdash ran as an independent because the government refused to lift the ban on the party. He called for a progressive national front against imperialism and democracy at home. His election in September made him the first communist to gain a seat in an Arab parliament. The SCP then joined forces with the **Ba'th Party** to oppose Syria's joining the **Baghdad Pact** in 1955. An arms deal with Czechoslovakia in February 1956 further bolstered the party's standing. Other developments that helped the SCP included the 1956 Suez War, in which **France**, **Great Britain**, and **Israel** attacked **Egypt**, while the Soviets vigorously supported Egypt, and the crisis in relations with the **United States** in the fall of 1957. In addition, in 1956 and 1957, the party worked closely with the popular independent politician **Khalid al-Azm**, a powerful member of the cabinet. The phenomenal increase in the SCP's standing by the end of 1957 was a factor in the decision taken by the Ba'th Party leadership and army officers to pursue union with Egypt and the creation of the **United Arab Republic** in February 1958. The union weakened the SCP in three ways. First, many members favored the union and left the party when Bakdash refused to endorse it; second, Bakdash himself went into exile; and third, all political parties were dissolved and the SCP in particular suffered harsh persecution under Gamal Abd al-Nasser's anticommunist regime.

The SCP never recovered the influence it enjoyed in the mid-1950s, but, in 1972, **Hafiz al-Asad** included it in the National Progressive Front led by the Ba'th Party. That prompted a faction to leave the party. The dissidents formed the Syrian Communist Party-Political Bureau headed by **Riyad al-Turk**. In 2005, that faction changed its name to the Syrian Democratic Peo-

ple's Party. Other splits in communist ranks during the 1980s and 1990s occurred as members lost patience with Bakdash's high-handed ways and refusal to support mildly liberalizing **economic reforms** of the 1980s. Unlike the nationalist and socialist parties in the National Progressive Front, which was viewed as an instrument of the regime, the communists managed to maintain a distinct profile and allure for a segment of Syrian society.

SYRIAN CONGRESS. During **Amir Faysal's** brief rule from October 1918 to July 1920, the Syrian Congress was the closest institution to a nationally elected assembly. In June 1919, members of the Congress were elected under **Ottoman** procedures in the main cities, while local notables chose delegates in other parts of the country. Faysal hoped that it would give his regime greater international legitimacy and strengthen his diplomatic position against **France's** claim to Syria. In particular, Faysal wanted a representative body to testify to Syrian aspirations before the **King-Crane Commission**, which President Woodrow Wilson sent to determine what kind of political arrangements the Syrians desired. A second task of the congress was to draft a **constitution**. A committee was formed and drew up a document for discussion, but consideration of the draft was interrupted by the French invasion in July 1920.

A **minority** of radical nationalist members dominated the congress and hampered Faysal's attempts to satisfy France's desire to build up its influence over Syria. To underscore its refusal to countenance any role for the French, in March 1920, the congress declared Faysal the king of a completely independent Syria. By that time, however, Faysal was more interested in fending off France's aggressive designs than nationalist posturing, yet he needed the congress to validate his standing in Syria. During the final crisis between Faysal and France, the congress voted to resist an invasion. The easy victory of French forces at the **Battle of Maysalun** in July 1920 spelled the end of the Syrian Congress.

SYRIAN-ISRAELI PEACE TALKS. After the **Madrid Conference** of October–November 1991, **Israel**, Syria, **Jordan**, **Lebanon**, and a **Palestinian** delegation convened in Washington, D.C., for bilateral talks. Between December 1991 and June 1993, Syria and Israel conducted nine rounds of talks. In the first four rounds until May 1992, the Syrians negotiated with an Israeli delegation appointed by the right-wing Likud government, and the talks made no headway in resolving their dispute. Then, in June 1992, Israel's Labor Party, headed by Yitzhak Rabin, defeated Likud in national elections. When bilateral talks resumed in August, a more civil tone was adopted by both parties, and Syria formally offered a peace treaty in exchange for the **Golan Heights**, which Israel has occupied since the **June**

1967 War. At the same time, Syria also insisted that its peace agreement with Israel be contingent on a comprehensive peace including Jordan, Lebanon, and the Palestinians. Israel rejected that position and insisted that Syria provide specific details on what it meant by normalizing relations that would accompany peace. At the seventh round in October, Israel stated that it would undertake a withdrawal in the Golan Heights but refused to commit itself to a full withdrawal. By the end of the 10th round in June 1993, the parties had come no closer to an agreement.

In August 1993, Israel and the **Palestine Liberation Organization** announced their agreement to exchange mutual recognition and to a process for resolving the Palestinian dimension of the Arab-Israeli conflict under the terms of the Oslo Accords. Syrian president **Hafiz al-Asad** responded to this stunning development by saying that Syria would neither oppose the accords nor their critics, mainly radical Palestinian factions based in Syria and Lebanon. To indicate his anger at the deal for sabotaging his strategy of negotiating on the basis of a common Arab position, Asad withheld Syrian participation in the 11th round of bilateral talks in September.

While Syrian-Israeli bilateral talks remained suspended, U.S. secretary of state Warren Christopher undertook shuttle diplomacy throughout 1994, seeking to narrow the differences between Syrian and Israeli positions. His efforts bore no fruit on the Syrian-Israeli track, but he did persuade Jordan to resume bilateral talks in June. This was quickly followed by an agreement to end the state of war between Jordan and Israel in July and a formal peace treaty in October. Once again, Asad's desire to maintain a common Arab position was thwarted. Meanwhile, a number of meetings between the Syrian and Israeli ambassadors to the **United States** took place in the second half of 1994. Christopher continued his shuttle diplomacy in 1995 and inched toward bridging the differences in the parties' positions.

After a new round of talks in June 1995, held in Washington, Syria indicated that it would share the Golan's **water** resources if Israel would fully withdraw. The Syrians also accepted Israel's position that **demilitarized zones** and limited forces zones would be deeper on the Syrian side of the border than on Israel's because of the latter's more shallow strategic depth. The extent of Israel's withdrawal remained the major point of contention because Prime Minister Rabin would not publicly pledge a full withdrawal, perhaps because he had shaky domestic political support for it. Furthermore, Rabin wanted a phased withdrawal during the course of three to five years, while Asad insisted that it take no longer than one year. Another point of difference was Israel's desire for normal relations, not just a formal peace treaty. Reports about the negotiations described Israel's view of normalization as entailing open borders, **tourism**, **trade**, and bilateral cooperation on

energy and water projects. Analysts noted that Syrians construed such elements of a peace treaty with suspicion rooted in fear of Israeli economic domination.

An intensive round of talks at the Wye River Plantation in Maryland, held between December 1995 and February 1996, was cut short by a wave of Palestinian suicide bombings in Israel, and the Syrian government refused to close the **Damascus** offices of Palestinian groups opposed to the Oslo Accords. The May 1996 election of Benjamin Netanyahu as Israel's prime minister led to a freeze on talks for the duration of his tenure, but the next prime minister, Ehud Barak, elected in May 1999, revived them and met Syrian foreign minister **Faruq al-Shara'** under U.S. auspices in Washington.

The last attempt to resolve the dispute during Asad's tenure took place when the Israeli prime minister and Syrian foreign minister met at **Shepherdstown**, West Virginia, hosted by the United States, in January 2000. The parties formed four special committees to focus on borders, security, water, and normalization. The talks foundered on disagreement over defining "full withdrawal." Israel refused to accede to Syria's demand for access to Lake Tiberias. A large part of the problem was that each side doubted the other's sincerity and intentions. The Syrians construed Israel's desire for normal relations as a pretext for establishing economic dominance; the Israelis viewed Syria's reluctance to embrace normal relations as evidence of deep-seated hostility. A last-ditch effort by President Bill Clinton to bridge the differences in a meeting with President Asad in Geneva in March failed. The death of Hafiz al-Asad in June 2000 probably made the prospect of a final settlement more remote because his son and successor, **Bashar al-Asad**, needed time to consolidate his regime. The eruption of violence between Israel and the Palestinian Authority in the fall of 2000 placed yet another obstacle in the way of a final Israeli Syrian settlement. The propitious climate of the middle to late 1990s for resolving their 50-year conflict had slipped away.

The most notable peace initiative during Bashar al-Asad's rule in Syria was mediated by the **Turkish** government starting in April 2008. Israeli prime minister Ehud Olmert sent a conciliatory letter to President Asad probing the chances for renewed negotiations. Even though Olmert was under criminal investigation on suspicion of bribery, he engaged in peace talks with Syrian officials. The prime minister discussed a possible truce with **Hamas** and offered to fund an investment project in the West Bank. He also indicated that Israel would be willing to evacuate the Golan Heights in full, if President Asad would make some concessions. The peace talks were made public on 21 May 2008. A second round of talks began in June, generating positive feedback from both leaders. Israel's need to combat **Iran's** rising regional influence and curb **Hizballah** created what Asad described as a "glimmer of hope" for future relations. Indirect talks continued until Septem-

ber, when Olmert had to resign following charges of political **corruption**. Negotiations were put on hold while Israelis went to the polls. The February 2009 election resulted in a Likud Party victory, and the talks came to an end. The new hard-line government in Israel signaled its opposition to Olmert's efforts by passing a law on 22 November 2010 that would make withdrawal from the Golan Heights or East Jerusalem subject to a national referendum and a two-thirds majority in the Knesset. Analysts argued that this new law would give Israeli hard-liners veto power over a possible peace agreement. *See also* FOREIGN POLICY.

SYRIAN ORTHODOX. Also known as Jacobite **Christians**. Their origins stem from 5th-century dogmatic disputes regarding the nature of Christ. One group, the Monophysites, advanced the idea that Christ was purely divine. They became the Copts, the dominant sect in **Egypt**, and in the 6th century, they gained a Syrian following largely through the work of Bishop Jacobus Baradaeus. Their **Greek Orthodox** opponents called them followers of Jacobus, or Jacobites. This was the most widely followed Christian sect at the time of the 7th-century Muslim conquest. Like the **Nestorians**, the Jacobites translated Greek scientific and philosophical works into Syriac, from which Arabic translations were made during the early **Islamic** centuries. In the 20th century, their patriarchate was first located in **Homs** but then moved to Damascus in 1957. Most Syrian Orthodox Christians live in Damascus, **Aleppo**, the vicinity of Homs, and **Jazira**, especially the towns of **al-Qamishli** and **al-Hasaka**.

SYRIAN–PALESTINE CONGRESS. Political organization based in Cairo and set up by Syrian exiles at a congress held in Geneva in June 1921. The Syrian–Palestine Congress strove for the unity of geographical Syria and the end of **French** and British rule. Its main activities were fund-raising and publishing propaganda on behalf of the Syrian nationalist movement, to which it devoted more attention than the **Palestine** cause. The congress was hampered by personal and political divisions among its leadership. One faction was more secular and looked to the **Hashemites** and **Great Britain** for support in the struggle against the **French Mandate**. This faction included **Abd al-Rahman Shahbandar**, whose **Iron Hand Society** and **People's Party** depended on funds the congress raised abroad. The other faction, which laid greater emphasis on **Islam**, looked more to **Turkey** and **Saudi Arabia** for support. **Shakib Arslan** and **Muhammad Rashid Rida** headed this group. A third faction emerged from members of the **Istiqlal Party**, which was secular, Pan-Arab, and anti-British. Its leading figure was **Adil Arslan**.

During the **Great Revolt** of 1925–1927, tensions between the factions mounted as the French negotiated with Shakib Arslan, thereby arousing Shahbandar's jealousy. Furthermore, Istiqlal member **Shukri al-Quwwatli** managed to convince the Saudi ruler Ibn Saud to contribute funds for the revolt. To handle the money, a Jerusalem Committee under Istiqlalist control was established, and when the French gained the upper hand against the revolt in the second half of 1926, the Shahbandar faction accused the Jerusalem Committee of embezzling funds. Mutual recriminations intensified, and, by the end of 1927, the congress had formally split into two separate organizations. The personal rivalries that developed in the Syrian–Palestine Congress persisted into the late 1930s in the form of mistrust between Quwwatli, by then a leader in the **National Bloc**, and Shahbandar, who was trying to edge his way back onto the political scene after a decade in exile.

SYRIAN SOCIAL NATIONAL PARTY (SSNP). Established in **Lebanon** in 1932, by **Antun al-Sa'ada**, this party is devoted to unifying historical Syria, which it defines as the modern states of Cyprus, **Iraq, Israel, Jordan**, Lebanon, and Syria. As an organization, the party emphasizes loyalty to the leader and militaristic discipline. Other key tenets include a firm commitment to secularism and opposition to sectarianism and localism. The party developed a substantial following in Lebanon but held little attraction in Syria until the execution of Sa'ada in 1949, after an alleged plot to overthrow the Lebanese government.

The party then moved its headquarters to **Damascus** under its new leader, George Abd al-Masih. Sa'ada's martyrdom elicited a wave of sympathy for the party, and, in November 1949, it won nine seats in elections to Syria's Constituent Assembly, gaining most of its votes from non-**Sunnis** and non-Arabs attracted to its secularism. The party's fortunes seemed to improve when **Adib al-Shishakli** came to power in a military coup in December 1949. The new strongman had briefly belonged to the SSNP during the **French Mandate**, and for a short time after his coup, he cultivated the party's backing. But in the campaign for the October 1953 elections to parliament, Shishakli spread insinuations in the press that the SSNP's candidates received funds from the **United States**. The party gained just one seat in the election, and it moved into opposition along with the **Ba'th Party**, the **Syrian Communist Party**, and the **Muslim Brotherhood**.

After Shishakli's fall in February 1954, new parliamentary elections were held in September. Public sympathy for the SSNP had apparently been exhausted, and its fortunes were damaged by swelling sentiment against pro-Western candidates. The party ran 15 candidates and won just two seats. Any potential it might still have had was crushed when a party member assassinated **Adnan al-Malki** in April 1955, after which its supporters in the army and government offices were purged. The party's Higher Council expelled

Abd al-Masih for his alleged role in plotting Malki's assassination and precipitating the Syrian government's crackdown on the party. Since that time, the SSNP has remained a force in Lebanese politics, but not in Syria.

SYRIAN UPRISING. In March 2011, a widespread popular uprising broke out seeking the fall of President **Bashar al-Asad** and the **Ba'th Party** regime. An unprecedented wave of mass protests, dubbed the **Arab Spring**, had already brought down the presidents of Tunisia and **Egypt** and was challenging the rulers of Libya, Yemen, and Bahrain. In Syria, discontent with the government fed on chronic problems in the **economy**, **corruption**, **censorship**, and **human rights** violations. Much of the country's northeastern region was in the midst of a devastating five-year **drought** that drove hundreds of thousands off the land to shantytowns ringing major cities.

The Syrian Uprising began in the southern town of **Dar'a** when **security forces** detained a group of schoolboys for spray painting antigovernment graffiti. When the townspeople learned that the security forces had tortured the boys, protests erupted and spread to other towns. President Asad responded with a mix of conciliatory statements and harsh repression, neither of which proved effective.

In its first few months, the uprising pitted unarmed civilians against plainclothes security forces and irregular militias known as **Shabiha**. In June and July 2011, the uprising began to take a militant turn as local self-defense committees took up arms and growing numbers of soldiers defected from the army to join the opposition. By the end of 2011, the violence was so widespread and intense that the uprising was turning into a civil war. The confrontation between the opposition and the government developed a sectarian dimension, pitting **Sunni Islamic fundamentalist** forces against Asad's **Alawi** sect. The human cost of the uprising's first two years was horrendous, with an estimated 100,000 dead, 3 million internally displaced individuals, and 1.5 million **refugees**.

The Syrian Uprising destabilized the surrounding region. The flow of refugees seeking safe havens turned into a flood in the first half of 2013 and stretched to the limit humanitarian capacity of **United Nations** agencies in **Lebanon**, **Jordan**, and **Turkey**. Rival regional power blocs picked sides, with **Saudi Arabia**, **Qatar**, and Turkey supporting the opposition, while **Iran** and its ally in Lebanon, **Hizballah**, provided crucial backing to the government. **Israel** was alarmed at the prospect that the Syrian government might lose control of its stockpiles of **nonconventional weapons** and that chemical weapons could fall into the hands of either Hizballah or extremist Sunni groups. Divisions at the international level hamstrung diplomatic efforts. The **European Union** and **United States** lent political support to the opposition, while **Russia** and **China** stood with the Asad regime. Two and a half years after the first protests, the roughly equal balance of power between

opposition and government and their foreign backers has made it difficult to envision how Syria's catastrophic conflict can be brought to an end. *See also* ASAD, AL-; ASAD, MAHIR AL- (1967–); EMERGENCY LAW; FOREIGN POLICY; MAKHLUF; MINORITIES. There is a special section on the Syrian Uprising that follows the dictionary section.

T

TABQA DAM. Located on the **Euphrates River** 200 kilometers east of **Aleppo**, construction began in 1968 and was completed in 1973, with technical and financial assistance from the Soviet Union. The Tabqa Dam is five kilometers long and 70 meters high. Its eight turbines have increased Syria's capacity to produce electricity and allowed an expansion of irrigated **agriculture**. An 80-kilometer-long lake behind the dam, called **Lake Asad**, supplies Aleppo's **water** through an underground aqueduct.

Syrian planners originally expected the dam to allow the extension of irrigated agriculture to 640,000 hectares, but this figure has been revised downward several times to 240,000 hectares. By the late 1980s, less than 30,000 hectares had been put under cultivation on state-run farms. The main problem with irrigation systems is the high gypsum content of the soil, which allows large amounts of water to seep into the earth and makes the irrigation channels susceptible to erosion.

Tabqa was formerly a small village, but the construction of the dam turned it into a provincial center with more than 75,000 residents. When the dam was completed, the government renamed Tabqa "Revolution City" (in Arabic, *Madinat al-Thawra*).

TA'IF ACCORD. The October 1989 agreement to restructure **Lebanon's** political system in a manner that formally ended **Christian** dominance and helped resolve the **Lebanese Civil War**. The immediate background to the accord lay in the stalemated presidential election of 1988, when it proved impossible to elect a successor to Amin Gemayel. President Gemayel designated General Michel Aoun interim prime minister, but the outgoing **Sunni** prime minister, Salim al-Hoss, refused to recognize Aoun, and for the next two years, Lebanon had two contenders for leadership: Michel Aoun and the Hoss cabinet. Heavy fighting broke out in 1988 and the first half of 1989, as General Aoun sought to force the Syrians out of the country. An initiative by the **League of Arab States** to resolve the crisis led to a meeting of the Lebanese parliament at the **Saudi Arabian** resort town of Ta'if in October 1989.

The Ta'if Accord provided for fundamental reform of Lebanon's political system by redistributing power among the president, prime minister, and speaker of the chamber, and by equalizing the Muslim and Christian ratios in parliament. It also called for the restoration of government authority over all of Lebanon, the evacuation of **Israel's** troops from the south, and the establishment of special ties with Syria.

The accord could not be immediately implemented because of Aoun's opposition on the basis that the withdrawal of foreign forces, Syrian and Israeli, should come first, but the powerful Christian Lebanese Forces decided to support the immediate application of Ta'if, and terrible fighting broke out between Aoun's mostly Christian army and the Lebanese Forces in early 1990. The situation appeared stalemated as Aoun stood his ground and enjoyed open diplomatic and military backing from **Iraq**. The deadlock was broken, however, in the wake of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990. Syria supported the U.S. moves against Iraq in the wake of the latter's annexation of Kuwait, and in return, the Americans reportedly agreed to a decisive Syrian military move against Aoun, who was forced into exile in **France**. Since then, Syria has consolidated its position as the dominant power in Lebanon and supported the reconstitution of the Lebanese state on the foundation of the Ta'if Accord.

TANZIMAT. Term for the reorganization of the **Ottoman Empire's** bureaucratic and military institutions that commenced in 1839 and is usually said to have lasted until 1876. In fact, the process of institutional modernization continued until the end of Ottoman rule in Syria in 1918. The purpose of the Tanzimat was to reestablish imperial control of the provinces, including Syria, and strengthen the empire against European encroachments. To achieve these goals, Ottoman reformers experimented with new administrative regulations, reformed military practices, overhauled the judicial system, promulgated law codes, invested in **transportation** and communications, and established schools based on European models to train soldiers and officials. The Tanzimat signaled a fundamental change in the purposes of Ottoman rule, which had customarily been limited to providing security and extracting revenues. The authorities now intended to involve the state in **education, trade**, public works, **agriculture**, and relations among the empire's diverse population.

Such an extensive program of change was bound to meet opposition, particularly from provincial groups whose political and economic fortunes might be diminished by a stronger central authority. Another cause of opposition to the Tanzimat lay in its secular thrust, embodied in the 1856 Imperial Rescript guaranteeing equal status between Muslims and non-Muslims. **Christians'** growing prosperity, due in large part to their ties to European traders and consuls, contributed to Muslim resentment and anger in the 1840s

and 1850s. In Syria, this anti-Christian sentiment exploded in two violent urban outbursts, the **Aleppo Massacre of 1850** and the **July 1860 Damascus Massacre**. In both instances, the Ottomans firmly suppressed communal violence, displaced the local urban leadership, and elevated a fresh group of individuals to the ranks of provincial leadership. The new urban elite proved more amenable to implementing Tanzimat measures.

The Ottomans applied Tanzimat measures in piecemeal fashion throughout the empire, and they did not take root in Syria until after 1860, when the Ottomans buttressed their authority by increasing the number of imperial troops and undermining the influence of local paramilitary contingents commanded by **aghas**. During the previous two decades, they had experimented with new forms of provincial and urban administration, chiefly councils composed of dignitaries drawn from the religious, civil, and non-Muslim elites. During the 1860s, the scope of the Tanzimat's application in Syria broadened: telegraph lines went up between Syria and Istanbul; provincial gendarmeries supplanted the traditional irregular forces; new criminal, civil, and commercial legal codes were enacted; land registration and direct taxation were implemented; and the first state schools opened. The Ottomans improved internal security by stationing larger, better-equipped military forces in new barracks and constructing garrisons on the fringes of the desert to control the **Bedouin**. By the early 1870s, a new set of local dignitaries who demonstrated loyalty to the Tanzimat Ottoman order was established as the political and economic elite. This provincial nobility and their descendants provided Syria's political leadership and dominated the country's **economy** for the remainder of the Ottoman era, throughout the **French Mandate** era, and in the early years of independence until it was displaced in the 1960s by the regimes of the **Ba`th Party**.

TARTUS. Originally a Phoenician settlement associated with a larger one on the island of Arwad. Located 30 kilometers north of the border with **Lebanon**, Tartus changed hands between Franks and Muslims during the **Crusades**, and it was the last **Christian** stronghold to fall to the **Mamluks** in 1291. In recent years, it has surpassed **Latakia** as the country's leading port. It handles the export of phosphate products and serves as the main transit point for **Iraqi** merchandise. It has also developed into a major site for Syria's cement **industry**.

Many of the 90,000 residents live inside its three ancient walls. Tartus is also the seat of a governorate with a population of 760,000. The region is one of Syria's main olive-growing regions. It also has much potential for **tourism**; therefore, it has attracted investment in a beach resort. Furthermore, it makes an attractive base for day excursions to nearby Phoenician and Crusader-era sites. Crusaders called it Tortosa, and they built a formidable fortress and cathedral, "Our Lady of Tortosa," which is preserved as a museum.

TELEVISION. *See* RADIO AND TELEVISION.

TERRORISM. Syria has consistently denied supporting terrorist organizations and claimed that it is itself the victim of antigovernment terrorism sponsored by hostile powers. The crucial episode, from Syria's perspective, was the uprising launched primarily by **Islamic fundamentalist** groups between 1976 and 1982. The case against the Syrian government, however, is broadly based. The **United States** suspects Syria of complicity in the 1983 suicide bombing of marine barracks in Beirut. **Great Britain** found evidence of official Syrian involvement in the 1986 **Hindawi Affair**. **Turkey** considered **Damascus's** support for the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) a form of involvement with terrorism and, in 1998, threatened to attack Syria if it did not cease harboring PKK leaders. In 2003, the United States included in its roster of terrorist organizations **Hizballah** and the **Palestinian** groups Islamic Jihad, **Hamas**, and radical **Palestine Liberation Organization** factions based in Syria and **Lebanon**. Syria did not deny supporting them, but it asserted that it was incorrect to label them terrorist, maintaining they were, in fact, forces resisting **Israeli** occupation of Arab lands. As for al-Qa'ida, Syria provided assistance to the U.S. campaign against Osama bin Laden's organization, for instance, when its security services participated in the U.S. rendition program in the case of a Syrian-born Canadian citizen named Maher al-Ar'ar.

THEATER. Syria shares with other Middle Eastern lands a historical tradition of puppet theater known as *karagoz*, or shadow theater. Performances often took place in tents near a **coffeehouse**, especially during winter nights and Ramadan. A bright lantern cast puppets' shadows on a screen, and the puppeteer moved the puppets and modulated his voice for the different characters. This popular entertainment occasionally offended conservative sectors because it catered to vulgar tastes with frequent obscene allusions. Political authorities in the **Ottoman** and **French Mandate** eras sometimes kept an eye on performances because they could serve as venues for political criticism.

The modern theatrical tradition began with performances staged in **Damascus** by **Ahmad Abu Khalil al-Qabbani** in the 1860s and 1870s. Conservative circles suppressed the theater in 1881, and it did not reappear until the **Committee of Union and Progress** restored constitutional government, and with it a freer cultural climate, in the Ottoman Empire in 1908. In the next few years, progressive young Syrians staged patriotic and historical plays, but, once again, conservative circles stirred controversy with accusations that theatrical performances violated religious taboos. During the French Mandate era, tours by **Egyptian** companies stimulated the formation of short-

lived theatrical clubs for Syrians interested in the **arts**, and they put on amateur performances in public parks, coffeehouses, and **cinemas**. A handful of more lasting theatrical troupes in Damascus and **Aleppo** emerged in the 1950s, but it took government support under a Ministry of Culture formed during the **United Arab Republic** to create a stable platform for professional theater to evolve. The ministry created a National Theater and paid regular salaries to actors and crews as government employees. Soon, other government-sponsored troupes were set up by the Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Education, and Ministry of Information. A growing number of actors, directors, and technical workers studied at European universities. Consequently, productions covered a broad range of the Western theatrical tradition, as well as the works of Syrian and other Arab playwrights.

Themes in Syrian scripts tend to focus on regional political issues, for example, the Arab–Israeli conflict, and on social and economic problems, but they never directly tackle sensitive domestic political matters. In the late 1960s, **Durayd al-Lahham** and others created a troupe called the Theater of Thorns that satirized **corruption** and bureaucratic inefficiency, yet tacitly observed understood, unwritten limits. The country's most renowned playwright was **Sa'dallah al-Wannus**, a pioneer in experimental performances that aimed to make audiences part of the presentation. Commercial theatrical performances became more common in the 1980s and drew crowds by staging burlesque, often slapstick routines, and by using the colloquial rather than the literary form of Arabic. The spread of television in the 1980s and 1990s is said to have hurt attendance at live theater, and a number of actors, directors, and writers shifted to working in television and cinema.

TIMUR LENG (1336–1405). Known in the West as Tamerlane, his name means Timur “the Lame,” referring to a limp that resulted from a wound he suffered in his youth. This Central Asian conqueror rose in the service of the Chaghatay **Mongol** ruler of western Central Asia. He later rebelled and seized power at Samarkand in 1369. From that point until his death 35 years later, Timur was almost constantly leading devastating military campaigns that struck terror into their victims. Apart from the usual excesses of massacre, rape, and plunder, Timur devised the grotesque practice of constructing towers of human skulls to mark his triumphs. For 30 years, he ravaged **Iran**, **Iraq**, southern **Russia**, eastern Asia Minor, and northern **India**. He briefly threatened Syria in 1387, while his soldiers marauded in Asia Minor. Timur sent an envoy to Cairo to the **Mamluk** sultan Barquq, who had the envoy murdered and then sought a military alliance with the rising **Ottoman** dynasty of western Asia Minor. Timur pursued other lines of conquest but returned to Syria in 1399, by which time Barquq had died. When the Ottomans proposed an alliance to his successor, the sultan rejected the idea, so the Mamluks faced the onslaught of Timurid forces alone. In the fall of 1400, Timur

led an invasion of Syria and drove the Mamluks out of **Aleppo** and **Damascus**. His troops pillaged both cities, and Timur ordered the deportation of thousands of skilled craftsmen and laborers to his capital at Samarkand. He left Damascus in March 1401 and headed east to sack Baghdad and then inflicted a devastating defeat on the Ottomans. His departure from Syria, however, gave the Mamluks the opportunity to restore their authority over Syria. Timur's insatiable appetite for conquest then led him to contemplate an invasion of **China**, but he died as he was planning the campaign. The enormous empire he had conquered during nearly four decades stretched across much of Asia, but it lacked institutional underpinnings and fragmented within two years of his demise.

TLAS, MUSTAFA (1932–). Minister of defense from 1972 to 2006. Tlas is a **Sunni** Muslim from Rastan, a town near **Homs**. He joined the **Ba`th Party** when he was a schoolboy and attended Homs Military Academy, where he became acquainted with another young Ba`thist, **Hafiz al-Asad**. After graduation, Tlas became an officer in a tank unit. He was brought onto the **Military Committee** after the **March 8, 1963 Coup** and, in August 1965, was named to the party's Regional Command. He participated in the **February 23, 1966 Coup** by the **Neo-Ba`th** against the party's original leadership. When a power struggle developed within the Neo-Ba`th between **Salah al-Jadid** and Hafiz al-Asad, Tlas sided with the latter. Asad bolstered his own base of power in the **armed forces** in February 1968 when he dismissed Ahmad al-Suwaydani as chief of staff and handed the post to Tlas and made him deputy minister of defense. Tlas ensured the loyalty of the **armed forces** to Asad, giving the latter the necessary backing for his seizure of power in the November 1970 **Corrective Movement**. In 1972, Asad made him minister of defense, and he held that position for more than three decades.

Few observers considered Tlas a powerful figure in the regime comparable to the commanders of sensitive military units formally under his authority. He was perhaps best known for occasionally making caustic remarks about other Arab leaders and regimes. For example, he once declared that **Palestinian** leader Yasir Arafat had betrayed the Palestinians, and he accused **Jordan** of blocking **Saudi** military assistance from reaching Syria during the **October 1973 War**. Tlas was an influential socialite and a patron of Syrian **literature**. He owned a publishing house known for documenting pre-Ba`thist Syria in great detail.

When **Bashar al-Asad** assumed power in 2000, Tlas was part of a six-man team intended to aid the new president in his duties. He resigned from office in May 2006, as one of the last remaining old-guard members in government.

TOURISM. The advent of steamship navigation in the Mediterranean Sea increased commercial contacts between Europe and Syria and made possible the emergence of tourism. In the 1840s, Syria became a standard part of Americans' and Europeans' journeys to the "Holy Land." A fashion in writing travelogues stimulated not only curiosity about what had seemed a remote land, but also an appetite to see its antiquities. In 1858, the publisher of a popular series of guides issued one for Syria and **Palestine**, and 10 years later, the first organized tour arrived. Because of the lack of European-style tourist amenities at the time, travel in the 1870s and 1880s was more akin to contemporary "adventure" excursions. Throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries, most Western tourists considered Syria a side trip they might take after visiting **Egypt** and Palestine. Moreover, there was no sustained or organized effort in Syria to attract visitors until fairly recently.

It was only in the late 1970s that authorities attempted to develop the tourist **industry** when government economic planners saw the advantages it could bring as a source of foreign **currency** to alleviate balance of payments difficulties, and as a factor in boosting employment. To foster the necessary infrastructure, the government has authorized mixed-sector companies, ventures that combine private enterprise and **public-sector** companies to develop hotels, restaurants, and sightseeing. Since 1986, when the government took some measures to liberalize the **economy**, the tourist sector has grown in response to adjustments to exchange rates, special treatment for imports of capital goods, and tax **holidays** for investors. The number of visitors increased from approximately 550,000 per year in the mid-1980s to nearly 3 million in the mid-1990s. Revenues from the tourist sector reflect its growing contribution to the economy. In 1993, tourism accounted for \$700 million, and, in 1998, that figure grew to nearly \$1.2 billion. In the 1990s, about three-quarters of all tourists came from Arab countries, particularly the Gulf. In addition, large numbers of **Iranian** tourists visit such religious sites as the shrine of al-Sayyida Zaynab. Finally, the rich historical treasures from ancient, classical, and **Islamic** civilizations make it an attractive destination for curious Western tourists. Their favorite destinations include classical **archaeological** sites like **Palmyra** and Ugarit; such early Christians sites as **Ma'lula**; **Crusader**-era castles like **Hisn al-Akrad** (Crac des Chevaliers); and the superb Islamic **architecture** of such historic cities as **Damascus**, **Aleppo**, and **Hama**.

In the first decade of President **Bashar al-Asad's** rule, the government invested huge sums of money to improve infrastructure and attract foreign visitors. Since 2011, the **Syrian Uprising** has had a devastating impact on the tourism sector. *See also* ECONOMIC REFORM.

TRADE. Since ancient times, Syria has been a crossroads for commercial traffic between Southwest Asia, the Mediterranean, and Northern Africa. Its major inland cities—**Damascus** and **Aleppo**—have served as entrepôts for long-distance overland trade. Throughout the centuries of **Islamic** civilization, goods passed through Syria to and from **Turkey**, Arabia, **Egypt**, **Iraq**, **Iran**, and **India**. The fortunes of long-distance traders suffered during times of war, plague, and insecurity in the desert, but Syria's central location between centers of production and population ensured that it would always bounce back from hard times and rejuvenate commercial ties with neighboring and more distant lands.

The first significant development in modern times was the increasing volume and value of maritime trade with Europe during the 19th century, particularly beginning in the 1840s, with the arrival of steamships in the Eastern Mediterranean. By the early 20th century, a substantial share of imports and exports was exchanged with Europe according to a pattern that was common between industrializing **economies** and primarily agrarian ones. Syria imported European manufactures and exported raw materials and **agricultural** products. Traditional routes to neighboring lands diminished but did not fall into disuse until the collapse of the **Ottoman Empire** in 1918, and the imposition of national boundaries severed historic trade routes. Thus, Aleppo merchants found themselves cut off from markets in Turkey. The major markets for Syrian crops and textiles during the **French Mandate** period were its Arab neighbors—Iraq, **Palestine**, **Transjordan**—and **France**. Imports primarily came from Western European countries, Japan, and the **United States**. A blow to traditional networks fell on townsmen in **Homs** and **Hama** at independence in 1946, when customary routes to **Lebanese** ports faced a new international boundary. To compensate for the loss of traditional outlets, Syria has built up two major ports on the Mediterranean at **Tartus** and **Latakia**.

The first decade of independence saw little change in patterns of foreign trade. The bulk of Syria's imports came from Lebanon, France, **Great Britain**, West Germany, and the United States. The leading imports were textiles, machinery, minerals, and metals. The main markets for Syrian exports were Arab countries, especially Lebanon, then France and Great Britain. Cotton was by far the single-largest export, averaging more than one-third of the total value. Grain crops, vegetables, and animal products made up the bulk of the remaining exports. The trade picture changed during the mid-1950s when political leaders negotiated deals with the Soviet Union to obtain technical assistance and capital for major development projects. These initiatives marked a gradual but dramatic shift in the source and destination for raw materials and manufactures toward the Soviet Bloc.

The reorientation of trade received a further boost under **Ba`th Party** regimes that steered the economy and **foreign policy** in a socialist direction during the 1960s. It was natural for the Soviet Bloc to assume a much larger place in foreign trade, in particular dominating imports in deals that often involved barter terms. In the early 1970s, **Hafiz al-Asad's Corrective Movement** revived the private sector, and Syria received large amounts of financial aid from wealthy Arab Gulf states. One consequence was a brief resurgence of trade with Western Europe. In 1980, Syria and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) signed a Friendship Treaty providing for increased trade. Moreover, Syria's ability to trade with Western Europe suffered due to a foreign exchange shortage arising from a combination of falling **petroleum** revenues and declining aid from Gulf states due to low prices and high military expenditures. The close relationship with Moscow enabled Syria to take advantage of barter deals, including a 1985 agreement with Yugoslavia that swapped Syrian phosphates for Yugoslav machinery, iron, and medical goods. Between 1980 and 1986, the Soviet Bloc's share of Syrian exports rose from 16 percent to 46 percent.

The collapse of the USSR coincided with **economic reform** initiatives, including selective relaxation of foreign exchange transactions to encourage more trade with Western Europe. Consequently, in the 1990s, Syria's main trading partners were Germany, Italy, and France. Exports to Turkey also became more valuable in that decade. Aside from petroleum, Syria exported vegetables, fruit, and textiles. Its chief imports were machinery and manufactured goods. In trade with the United States, Syria exported petroleum products, antiques, and spices, and imported grain, tobacco, and appliances. For Syria to optimize its potential, the government still had to dismantle layers of tariffs and red tape that had become instruments for merchants connected to the regime to dominate foreign trade.

The **Syrian Uprising** has cast a shadow over trade. The **European Union** had been Syria's largest trading partner in recent years, but in response to the regime's use of violence against civilians, it imposed a series of sanctions, including bans on the import of petroleum and the export of oil and gas equipment. Trade with neighboring countries has declined as well. Turkey's commerce with Syria has dipped, and its extensive investments in Syrian enterprises are at risk. Lebanon, too, has felt economic fallout from Syria's turmoil, as it stands to lose an important market. Trade between Syria and Jordan had been growing in the few years before the uprising but has come to a halt since Damascus tightened control of the border as a security measure.

TRADE UNIONS. *See* LABOR MOVEMENT.

TRANSJORDAN. After **World War I**, **Great Britain** assumed a League of Nations mandate over **Palestine**, which consisted of southern Syrian lands on both sides of the Jordan River. When the **French** evicted **Amir Faysal** from Syria, the British decided to install his brother Abdallah as amir of Transjordan, thus founding the one enduring political legacy to Britain's wartime alliance with the **Hashemite** clan. Abdallah schemed to expand his realm by taking over Syria. To that end, he developed good relations with a number of prominent Syrian personalities. Abdallah's territorial ambitions ultimately took him westward. In the **Palestine War of 1948**, his forces conquered those parts of Palestine that the **United Nations** had set aside for an Arab state. Since Abdallah's domain was no longer "across the Jordan," he re-named it **Jordan**. *See also* FOREIGN POLICY; GREATER SYRIA.

TRANSPORTATION. For centuries, **Damascus** and **Aleppo** were hubs for long-distance **trade** between Asia, Arabia, **Egypt**, **Turkey**, and the Mediterranean. Merchants dispatched goods by camel, traversing well-worn caravan routes. In **Islamic** times, the annual pilgrimage to Mecca was the occasion for trade, as well as performance of a religious duty. Each year, Muslim rulers would organize a large caravan escorted by soldiers to protect pilgrims from **Bedouin** raiders.

Starting in the late 1800s, transportation in the Middle East underwent modernization as the region became integrated with the expanding European capitalist **economy**. **Railways** were essential to the intensification of international commerce because they made possible the transport of larger quantities of goods at speeds far surpassing camel caravans. Trains also integrated regional economies by connecting zones of **agricultural** production with centers of manufacture and trade. The introduction of motor transport in the early 20th century dovetailed with rail travel in shortening travel time and expanding the scope of individuals' interactions beyond destinations accessible by riding horses, donkeys, and camels. Modern transportation had political effects as the wider geographical horizons of individuals expanded frames of reference for identity beyond village or town to the new concept of the nation.

The development of modern transportation in Syria began in the 1890s, with the construction of railways connecting Damascus, Aleppo, and **Homs** to ports at Beirut and Tripoli. During the **French Mandate**, there was little further development of rail transport, but paved roads for motor vehicles increased from 700 kilometers to 2,900 kilometers by 1939, and a regular motor service between Damascus and Baghdad was begun. The first two decades of independence saw the gradual extension of paved roads to more remote parts of the country. Between 1968 and 1990, paved roads increased from 8,100 kilometers to nearly 23,000 kilometers. During the same period, railway track grew from 850 kilometers to more than 2,000 kilometers.

Before **World War I**, the chief Mediterranean ports for Syria were **Alexandretta**, Tripoli, Beirut, and Haifa, but the post-Ottoman boundaries placed those outlets outside Syria's borders. Syria has developed new ports since independence. Construction on **Latakia's** port began in 1952; a new port opened at **Tartus** in 1970, and, in the 1980s, it surpassed Latakia as Syria's main port. **Baniyas** is a third port that primarily services **petroleum** exports. In the 1990s, the port at Tartus was expanded so that the volume of merchandise passing through it surpassed Latakia. *See also* ABID, AHMAD IZZAT AL- (1851–1924).

TROUPES SPÉCIALES DU LEVANT. During the **French Mandate**, **French** authorities set up an **armed force** of Syrians, initially called the Legion Syrienne, then the Troupes Auxiliares, and finally, in 1930, the Troupes Spéciales du Levant. The force's numbers grew from 6,500 in 1924 to 14,000 in 1936. To train officers for the Troupes Spéciales, the French established a Military Academy in **Damascus** in 1920, which was moved to **Homs** in 1932. Controversy swirled regarding the mandatory authorities recruitment practices, with Syrian nationalists charging France with enlisting disproportionate numbers of non-Arab and non-Muslim **minorities**, including **Armenians**, **Kurds**, and **Circassians**, while others argued that recruiting patterns fluctuated and did not reflect a cynical policy of exploiting and deepening Syria's communal divisions. The issue has assumed historiographical and political significance because army officers of minority background have dominated the country's politics since 1963, and some observers explain their ascent by referring to the practices of the country's former colonial power.

TURK, RIYAD AL- (1930–). One of Syria's better-known prisoners of conscience during the regime of **Hafiz al-Asad**. Turk first gained prominence as an influential intellectual figure in the **Syrian Communist Party** during the late 1950s. During the **United Arab Republic** and the early **Ba'th Party** regimes, he and other communists spent time in prison and exile. Then Asad created a coalition of permitted parties in 1972, including the Communist Party, but Turk opposed the decision to participate and left to form his own faction, known as the Communist Party-Political Bureau. The authorities arrested him in 1980, during the height of antigovernment agitation by a spectrum of secular and religious groups. **Human rights** organizations have noted that the severe and frequent torture he underwent during 17 years in prison left him with several chronic ailments. The authorities finally released him in 1998, apparently on the condition that he stay out of public life.

Perhaps emboldened by the climate of toleration in **Bashar al-Asad's** first year as president, Turk spoke out in summer 2001, at so-called **civil-society** salons, and on the Arabic satellite television channel al-Jazira. He condemned various aspects of Syria's domestic and **foreign policy**. Shortly afterward, **security forces** rearrested him as part of a broad campaign to suppress the growing movement for democracy. He was sentenced to two and a half years on charges of undermining the **constitution**, but after he served just five months, President Asad pardoned him without a public explanation. The **European Union (EU)** had urged his release, and Asad's government was in talks with the EU on **trade** matters, thus observers speculated that there was a connection between the two developments.

TURKEY. Relations with the successor state of the **Ottoman Empire** have fluctuated between hostile and cordial. When Syria became independent, just seven years had elapsed since Turkey's annexation of **Alexandretta**. Turkey's recognition of **Israel** further rankled Syrians. Finally, in the 1950s, Turkey joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and openly aligned itself with Western interests in the region. Syria, on the other hand, pursued a neutralist line before seeking economic and military support from the Soviet Union. In March 1955, Turkey massed its troops along the border to dissuade the Syrians from signing a defense pact with **Egypt** and **Saudi Arabia**. In the spring and summer of 1957, Turkey again sent troops to the border to signal its disapproval of Syria's economic and weapons deals with the Soviets. Relations did not begin to improve until the 1960s, when Turkey sought regional support for its position on Cyprus. In both the **June 1967 War** and **October 1973 War**, Turkey provided diplomatic and humanitarian support for the Arab side. Moreover, beginning in 1970, **Hafiz al-Asad** began to actively cultivate better relations, for instance, initiating the frequent exchange of ministerial-level missions.

Three outstanding bilateral issues have complicated Syrian-Turkish relations. First, there is the 500-kilometer border drawn at the end of **World War I**. The border left many Turks, Syrians, and their respective properties on the wrong side of the new international frontier. This situation most acutely affected **families** with **agricultural** properties across the border. The governments adopted pragmatic policies allowing the other country's nationals to continue cultivating their property, but Syrian **land reforms** and nationalizations disenfranchised Turks with property in Syria. The Turkish government retaliated with seizures of Syrians' property. The second major issue is the sharing of river **waters**, primarily the **Euphrates River**, but also the **Orontes River**. Since the late 1960s, Turkey has been developing a network of dams and hydraulic projects to vastly increase its hydroelectric output and irrigated lands. At the same time, Syria depends on certain levels of the Euphrates for irrigation and electrical generation at the **Tabqa Dam**.

The third issue arose from Syrian support for the activities of **Armenian** organizations and **Kurdish** guerrillas in the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK).

In 1996, Turkey and Israel secretly concluded a military agreement that permitted the Israeli Air Force to use Turkish air space for exercises. The agreement created a new security dilemma for Syria and rendered it more susceptible to Turkish saber rattling regarding its assistance to the PKK. In 1998, Ankara declared that Syria must cease harboring PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan. To show they were serious, Turkey's generals put troops stationed along the Syrian border on alert at the same time that they sent forces into northern **Iraq** to pursue PKK rebels. Egyptian president Husni Mubarak and the **Iranian** foreign minister waged intensive diplomacy to defuse the crisis, leading to Syria's decision to expel Öcalan and shut down PKK offices in **Damascus** and bases in **Lebanon's** Bekaa Valley.

During **Bashar al-Asad's** rule, political relations have improved and economic exchanges increased as chronic tensions concerning water and Kurdish activities in Turkey eased. In November 2002, the ascent of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) marked a new phase in Turkey's **foreign policy** as it took steps to mute tensions with Syria, as well as Armenia and Iran. The AKP strove to improve relations with Arab states and became more active in mediating political tensions in the region. In 2008, Turkey served as a conduit for talks between Syria and Israel regarding the Golan Heights.

Rapprochement between the two nations was most evident in terms of growing **trade**, as Ankara sought expanded markets for Turkish traders. In 2004, Syria and Turkey signed a free trade agreement, and within four years, trade surpassed \$1 billion. Ankara and Damascus entered more than 20 cooperation agreements related to trade and economic development, in addition to establishing joint business councils, economic commissions, and partnership councils designed to expand financial opportunities for investors. Low labor and raw material costs in Syria drew Turkish investments in **energy**, agriculture, and manufacturing. The elimination of visa requirements in September 2009 was a clear sign of progress in relations that had long been bedeviled by political and historical tension. Even on the sensitive matter of water sharing, Damascus and Ankara agreed to the creation of the Friendship Dam that would supply irrigation and electricity to both countries. Turkey's diplomatic initiatives in the Middle East also led to a number of military cooperation agreements that cut across regional alignments, as Ankara signed pacts with Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, **Jordan**, Israel, and Syria. In April 2009, Ankara and Damascus held a three-day joint military exercise along their border as part of their defense agreement aimed at boosting mutual confidence.

The Turkish government's response to the **Syrian Uprising** in 2011, however, undid the progress made in the previous 10 years when President Asad rejected Turkey's calls for him to cease using lethal force against protesters.

Relations deteriorated rapidly. By the fall of 2011, Turkey was supporting opposition groups seeking to overthrow the Asad regime. In addition to setting up camps for Syrian **refugees**, the Turks have allowed fighters and arms to enter Syrian territory.

TURKOMEN. Non-Arab, **Sunni** Muslim Turks who live in **Jazira** province, along the lower **Euphrates River**, near **Aleppo**, and in villages thinly scattered in central Syria. They are descendants of Turkomen nomadic tribes that entered Syria at various times between the 11th and 17th centuries, often encouraged by dynasties that sought to put the Turkomen's military prowess at their service. The **Ottomans** established them in central Syria around **Hama** and **Homs** during the 16th century to curb **Bedouin** depredations and serve as tax collectors in rural districts.

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ULAMA. The general term for Muslim scholars of **Islamic** sciences, they have held a special status since early Islamic times. In the early Islamic centuries, one acquired religious knowledge by studying under established scholars known for their expertise in particular fields of knowledge. Beginning in the 11th century, religious learning became institutionalized in **madrasas**. In addition to their educational function, ulama staffed the religious law (**shari`a**) courts, served as jurisconsults (*muftis*) interpreting the law, and performed a variety of functions at mosques. The ulama also dominated the administration of endowed properties (sing. **waqf**), for which service they received income. Most ulama pursued private interests in **trade** and manufacture as well.

Ulama comprised a large part of the urban elite until the late 19th century, when the **Ottoman-era Tanzimat** reforms promoted secular **educational** and legal institutions. From that time onward, their significance and status in society began to decline. While most ulama adhered to their traditional ways, a small number advanced an Islamic reform movement, called the **Salafiyya**, in a bid to reestablish their centrality and stave off the tide of secularism. In the 20th century, however, the ulama's prospects and numbers have continued to diminish. The ulama are still central in Islamic religious institutions and education, and some of them have played an important role in such modern Islamic movements as the **Muslim Brotherhood**.

UMAYYAD DYNASTY. Rulers of the Arab Empire from 661 to 750. The dynasty's roots are in the clan of Umayya, one of the preeminent clans of Mecca during the life of Muhammad; most clan members bitterly opposed Muhammad, although a few were early converts. The third Rightly Guided Caliph, Uthman (r. 644–656), belonged to this clan and appointed several of his kinsmen to powerful positions in the emergent Arab imperial administration. Uthman was murdered by Muslim opponents, who then proclaimed his rival, **Ali ibn Abi Talib**, the new caliph, but Uthman's Umayyad clansmen demanded revenge for his murder and refused to recognize Ali as caliph until they were satisfied. There ensued a Muslim civil war between forces loyal to

Ali and the Umayyads, headed by the governor of Syria, **Mu'awiya**. The military confrontation fizzled into arbitration, and before a resolution of the matter, Ali was assassinated by a disgruntled former partisan, thus opening the way for Mu'awiya's unchallenged ascent to the **caliphate**.

Under the Umayyads, Arab military expeditions reached **India** and **China** in the east and Spain in the west, pushing the bounds of the Arab Empire to their greatest extent. They consolidated Arab rule over much of Central Asia, leading to the eventual conversion of that region's peoples to **Islam**. In the later 740s, Umayyad rule weakened because of rivalry between factions within the ruling family and increasing discontent among the empire's growing number of non-Arab converts to Islam, who continued to receive the treatment of conquered subjects. In 749, a revolutionary movement led by the **Abbasid** clan took advantage of the Umayyads' vulnerability and swept them out of power. The last Umayyad caliph was hunted down and killed in **Egypt** in 750, but a handful of survivors fled to North Africa, and then to Spain, where they established a new line of Muslim rulers that lasted into the 11th century.

UMAYYAD MOSQUE. The major **Islamic** monument in **Damascus**. The mosque was originally an Aramaean temple to Baal-Hadad, then successively a Roman temple to Jupiter and a **Christian** church dedicated to John the Baptist. For 70 years after the Arab conquest of Damascus, the new Muslim rulers left the church alone. Then the **Umayyad** caliph al-Walid (r. 705–715) turned the church into a mosque and built a splendid new structure that blended the older Christian **architecture** with newer Islamic elements. He leveled the Church of St. John, preserving only the four towers at the corners. One of the mosque's most unusual features is the extensive **Byzantine**-style mosaic ornamentation on the façade of the courtyard. It contains perhaps the oldest extant specimen of Islamic carving in marble in a geometric pattern. The mosque has been burned three times: in 1069, during fighting between townsfolk and the **Fatimid** garrison; in 1400, when **Timur Leng** sacked the city; and by accident in 1893.

UNEMPLOYMENT. *See* LABOR FORCE AND UNEMPLOYMENT.

UNIATE. Term that refers to an eastern church that has entered into union with the Roman **Catholic** Church. These include the **Greek Catholic**, **Syrian Catholic**, **Chaldaean Catholic**, and **Armenian Catholic** churches. They acknowledge papal authority in dogma yet retain their distinctive liturgies. *See also* CHRISTIANS; RELIGION.

UNITED ARAB REPUBLIC (UAR). Political union of Syria and **Egypt** that formed on 1 February 1958 and lasted until 28 September 1961. The UAR came about largely due to the initiative of members of the **Ba'th Party** in the Syrian government. Army officers also tended to favor union as a way to secure their dominance in Syrian politics. In the new republic, Egypt and Syria were referred to as the northern and southern regions, respectively, and Cairo became the capital. Egyptian president Gamal Abd al-Nasser completely dominated the UAR's politics by insisting on the dissolution of all Syrian political parties, including the Ba'th, as a condition for forming the union. He also sent Egyptian security services to stamp out any dissent.

The first UAR government counted three Syrians in the cabinet, including Ba'th Party leaders **Salah al-Din al-Bitar** and **Akram al-Hawrani**. In addition, the Ba'th was given three ministries in the provincial Syrian cabinet. Nonetheless, Nasser allotted little authority to the ministries, and the Ba'thists became disenchanted with union. In December 1959, Ba'th Party leaders resigned from the UAR government that they had brought about. A few months later, three more Syrians resigned their central government posts as well. Nasser then purged the Syrian officer corps of any individuals whose loyalty could be questioned and reduced by half the number of Syrian officers; at the same time, he sent more than 2,000 Egyptian officers to Syria. In addition to Egypt's political domination of the UAR, it dominated the union's **economy** through preferential treatment for Egyptian **industries** and **banks** and restrictions on Syria's foreign **trade**.

By the beginning of 1961, most Syrians' enthusiasm for the union had dissipated, and their disenchantment deepened with the announcement in July 1961 of **Socialist Decrees** nationalizing broad sectors of the economy. Perhaps the final straw for Syrians came in August 1961, when Nasser proposed to decentralize administration. This would have divided Syria into several provinces, each governed by an individual appointed by Nasser. **Damascus** would no longer serve as an effective capital even of the UAR's northern region. On 28 September 1961, disaffected Syrian officers and politicians seized power and dissolved the union.

After the **March 8, 1963 Coup** brought to power a pro-union regime, Egyptian and Syrian leaders held talks for reviving an enlarged UAR that would add **Iraq**, where a Ba'thist regime had come to power in February, to the union. The talks lasted for one month, but mutual mistrust clouded the chances for agreement on a formula that would have achieved unity yet respected the distinct conditions in each country. *See also* FOREIGN POLICY.

UNITED NATIONS (UN). Syria is a founding member of the UN. It signed the UN declaration in April 1945 and sent a delegation to the San Francisco Conference in October 1945. A handful of UN bodies have played prominent

roles in Syria. The most important is the United Nations Relief and Works Agency, which provides basic **education** and **health** care to more than 400,000 **Palestinian refugees**. Since 1974, the **United Nations Disengagement Observer Force** has patrolled a buffer zone in the **Golan Heights** to preserve calm between Syria and **Israel**. A third body, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, has assisted in the preservation of historical and **archaeological** sites.

Syria and other Arab countries frequently use the UN to exert pressure on Israel to return land it conquered in the **June 1967 War**, to refrain from annexing Palestinian land in the West Bank and Gaza, and to treat Palestinians under Israeli occupation less harshly. In October 2002, Syria was elected to a rotating seat on the UN Security Council for a two-year term as one of 10 nonpermanent members. That diplomatic opportunity came at a moment of regional crisis because the **United States** was seeking Security Council authorization for the use of force against **Iraq** for failure to comply with previous UN resolutions dating to its 1990 invasion of Kuwait. In November, Syria voted for UN Resolution 1441, which required Iraq to allow weapons inspectors back into the country and voluntarily dismantle weapons of mass destruction. When the United States lobbied for a second resolution in early 2003, Syria did not have to resist authorizing the use of force because **France** and **Russia** threatened to veto such a motion. **Bashar al-Asad's** regime clashed with the UN regarding its investigations of the **Rafiq al-Hariri assassination** in 2005. The role of the UN in addressing the violence in the **Syrian Uprising** has been limited to ineffective diplomatic initiatives and assistance to **refugees**.

UNITED NATIONS DISENGAGEMENT OBSERVER FORCE (UNDOF). After the **October 1973 War**, U.S. secretary of state Henry Kissinger mediated an agreement between Syria and **Israel** to disengage their forces in the **Golan Heights**. They concluded a disengagement accord on 31 May 1974, and, on the basis of **United Nations (UN)** Resolution 350, the UN created the UNDOF to oversee implementation. The accord established three distinct zones. The buffer zone, termed the “area of separation,” is about 80 kilometers long and two to nine kilometers wide. UNDOF patrols it, and neither country may place **armed forces** there. On either side of the buffer there are two more zones where the Israelis and Syrians observe limits on arms and forces. The UN forces number about 1,000 men. Their base is on the Syrian side of the zone, and their administrative offices operate in **Damascus**. UNDOF has worked with the Syrians and Israelis to maintain quiet in the Golan Heights.

UNITED NATIONS RESOLUTION 242. At the conclusion of the **June 1967 War**, the United Nations (UN) Security Council passed this resolution calling for the withdrawal of **Israel's** forces from territories it occupied during the war, including the **Golan Heights**, the Sinai Peninsula, Gaza, and the West Bank. The resolution also called for an end to the state of war and the establishment of peace in the region. Syria's **Neo-Ba`th** regime rejected the resolution, but after the **October 1973 War**, the regime of **Hafiz al-Asad** accepted it. Since then, Syria has regarded UN Resolution 242 as the basis for peace with Israel because the Syrians believe that its implementation will bring about the recovery of the Golan Heights.

UNITED NATIONS RESOLUTION 338. At the end of the **October 1973 War**, the United Nations (UN) Security Council passed this resolution calling for implementation of UN Resolution 242, including the withdrawal of **Israel's** forces from the occupied territories. Syria accepted the resolution in the hope that a diplomatic approach would bring about an Israeli withdrawal from the **Golan Heights**.

UNITED STATES. During the Cold War, the chief concern of U.S. policy makers was to bring Syria into the region's pro-Western camp. Syria's primary **foreign policy** concerns, however, were regional ones, particularly the conflict with **Israel** and ties with other Arab nations. The United States supported the military coup of **Husni al-Za'im** in March 1949 in the hope that he would reach an agreement with Israel. The United States also had good relations with **Adib al-Shishakli** and tried to persuade him to enter into an anticommunist military alliance in 1951, but he had to contend with the popular neutralist campaign of the **Ba`th Party**, the **Arab Socialist Party**, and the Islamic Socialist Front. Following Shishakli's overthrow in 1954, Syria continued to elude American and British attempts to bring it into pro-Western alliances, for instance, the **Baghdad Pact**. As the leftist trend in Syrian politics gained strength, the Dwight D. Eisenhower administration became alarmed and decided to try to overthrow the government. On 12 August 1957, the Syrian government expelled three U.S. diplomats for plotting a coup d'état. The Americans had contacted several Syrian Army officers, but the plot was quickly detected and aborted. Washington then orchestrated a public campaign criticizing Syria for falling into the orbit of the Soviet Union. It dispatched a State Department official to confer with leaders of **Turkey**, **Iraq**, **Lebanon**, and **Jordan** about the "Syria problem." By October, the crisis in American-Syrian relations was smoothed over by the diplomatic efforts of **Saudi Arabia**, but the threat it posed accelerated Syria's rush into union with **Egypt's** Gamal Abd al-Nasser and the formation of the **United Arab Republic**.

There followed a long period of poor relations that reached their nadir when Syria severed diplomatic relations after the **June 1967 War**. Six years later, after the **October 1973 War**, the Syrians accepted American mediation for a disengagement of forces in the **Golan Heights**. The two countries restored diplomatic relations in June 1974, and the United States provided limited assistance for economic development projects. The following year, however, the United States mediated an Egyptian–Israeli agreement that revived President **Hafiz al-Asad’s** distrust for the United States.

Relations continued to deteriorate in the early 1980s, particularly regarding Israel’s invasion of Lebanon in 1982 and the American attempt to secure diplomatic gains for Israel in the form of a security agreement with Lebanon. The United States decided to give full support to Lebanese president Amin Gemayel’s bid to establish his government’s authority over the country. Syria responded by rallying Lebanese opposition to Gemayel and his American backers. Washington accused the Syrians of plotting the suicide truck bomb that demolished the marine barracks and killed more than 200 Americans in Beirut in October 1983. U.S. naval and air forces bombarded Lebanese militias allied with Syria, and, in December 1983, Syrian forces shot down two American warplanes. Two months later, the United States withdrew its forces from Lebanon. During the next few years, relations remained strained as the United States pursued the Reagan Plan for a peace settlement between Jordan and Israel.

The administration of George H. W. Bush (1989–1993) moved to improve relations with Syria by cooperating in Lebanon, and Syria was seeking to repair relations with the United States at a time when Soviet power was clearly on the wane. Then, Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait created an opening for a greater degree of cooperation. Asad seized the opportunity by agreeing to send Syrian forces to participate in Operation Desert Shield to protect Saudi Arabia from a possible Iraqi attack. In return, the United States apparently acquiesced to a Syrian attack on its nemesis in Lebanon, General Michel Aoun, to pave the way for an end to the **Lebanese Civil War on Damascus’s** terms, including implementation of the **Ta’if Accord**. Throughout the crisis leading up to the 1991 war between Iraq and the American-led coalition, Syria provided valuable political support for the United States and its Arab allies. After the conclusion of Operation Desert Storm, the multinational military campaign to expel Iraqi forces from Kuwait, the United States pushed harder for a comprehensive settlement to the Arab–Israeli conflict that addressed Syria’s desire to recover the Golan Heights. The Syrians agreed to attend the **Madrid Conference** in October–November 1991, largely because of a desire to maintain better relations with the United States.

Between 1993 and 2000, President Bill Clinton and his secretaries of state, Warren Christopher and Madeleine Albright, expended much effort to bring the **Syrian–Israeli peace talks** to a successful conclusion. In that pursuit,

Washington and Damascus frequently consulted, and Clinton became the first president to visit Damascus in 20 years when he stopped there in October 1994 after attending the signing of the Israeli–Jordanian peace treaty. Five years later, Clinton gave strong backing to Israeli prime minister Ehud Barak’s bid for a final deal with the ailing President Asad in December 1999–January 2000. Talks at **Shepherdstown**, West Virginia, saw the most intensive American engagement in Syrian–Israeli diplomacy thus far, but they failed. Clinton tried one last time to bridge the gap by meeting with Asad at Geneva on 26 March 2000, but the meeting proved fruitless and a high point in American–Syrian relations had passed.

While Washington and Damascus worked toward a regional peace agreement, bilateral tensions simmered. The United States considered Syrian support for militant resistance to Israel in Lebanon and the **Palestinian** territories to be state-sponsored **terrorism**. Washington also criticized Damascus for pursuing **nonconventional weapons** and violating its citizens’ **human rights**. Moreover, U.S. Congress found it convenient to sanction Syria to attract support from pro-Israel political groups. The collapse of peace talks with Israel, the death of Hafiz al-Asad, and the arrival in 2001 of a more aggressive American administration under President George W. Bush contributed to a worsening of relations.

The second Bush administration initially tried to persuade **Bashar al-Asad** to respect **United Nations (UN)** sanctions on **trade** with Iraq, which Syria was clearly violating. That issue receded after the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States, and Damascus offered assistance in the campaign against Osama bin Laden’s al-Qa’ida organization. But after the United States overthrew the Taliban in Afghanistan, it turned its attention to Saddam Husayn’s regime in Iraq. While Syria had a track record of bad relations with Husayn, it did not wish to see a pro-American regime installed in Baghdad. During the spring 2003 U.S. war in Iraq, Syria sent some military equipment and permitted volunteers to enter Iraq to fight against the Americans. The United States expressed its unwillingness to tolerate support for Husayn, and the Syrians backed off. At the end of the year, Washington stepped up pressure on Damascus by enacting the Syrian Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act, which authorized President Bush to impose new sanctions if the Syrians did not satisfy U.S. demands on a range of issues, including proliferation of nonconventional weapons, support for terrorism, and withdrawal from Lebanon. Given the low level of U.S.–Syrian trade, the threat of sanctions was more symbolic than substantial, but the proximity of U.S. troops across the Iraqi border certainly caused the Syrians concern.

With U.S. troops in Iraq and unfriendly neighbors in Turkey and Israel, Syria was in a more vulnerable position than any time in recent decades. The Soviet Union was no longer around to balance American domination. The

Arab countries were divided between clearly pro-American regimes, for example, Egypt and Jordan, and those like Syria trying to maintain correct relations without accepting American dictates regarding domestic and foreign policies.

Syrian support for the anti-American insurgency in Iraq bolstered the position of figures in the Bush administration who wished to bring about Asad's fall in the name of removing obstacles to U.S. interests and spreading democracy. The assassination of former Lebanese prime minister **Rafiq al-Hariri** in 2005 brought relations between Washington and Damascus to their lowest point in two decades, as the Bush administration blamed Syria for the killing and supported UN investigations to identify the perpetrators of the crime. The United States and Syria also remained at odds over Damascus's backing for **Hamas** and **Hizballah**, as well as its friendly relations with **Iran**.

The election of Barack Obama as president of the United States in 2008 opened the way for a thaw in relations between the two countries, but congressional hostility toward the Asad regime stood in the way, as did Asad's sense that he did not need to make concessions to Washington. In February 2010, President Obama appointed Robert Ford ambassador to Syria, filling a position that had been vacant for five years. The move was part of a broader strategy to reengage Damascus and reduce Iranian influence in regional affairs. In the early phase of the **Syrian Uprising**, the Obama administration backed opposition demands for democratic political reforms. In July 2011, Ambassador Ford visited **Hama** to show American solidarity with protesters. In August, Washington called for Asad to step down but refrained from providing military assistance or promising military intervention to achieve it, preferring to take the path of multilateral diplomacy to avoid a new quagmire in the Muslim world.

UTRI, MUHAMMAD NAJI AL- (1944–). Prime minister from 2003 to 2011, from **Aleppo**. Utri studied **architecture** and urban planning in the Netherlands before returning to Syria and becoming head of the Aleppo City Council. He served as governor of **Homs** and president of Aleppo's Engineering Syndicate before pursuing more influential positions in the **Ba'th Party's** Central Committee and Regional Command. In 2000, he was named deputy prime minister for Services Affairs and three years later was elected speaker of the Syrian Parliament. Utri was appointed prime minister in September 2003. The politician had the attributes of a party loyalist, as well as the qualifications of a reformist technocrat. While Utri was an able administrator, experts considered the position of prime minister in Syria more ceremonial than substantial.

V

VENEZUELA. In 1998, Hugo Chávez won the national presidential elections and subsequently dominated Venezuelan politics until his death in 2013. Chavez aspired to lead a revolutionary movement, not only in his country, but on the world stage. Hence, his **foreign policy** embraced regimes opposed to the **United States** and its allies. Along with Cuba, Libya, and **Iran**, Chavez strengthened ties with Syria. In 2006, he embarked on his first state visit to **Damascus** in an attempt to consolidate opposition to Washington. The visit was part of a broader campaign to curb U.S. influence.

In March 2007, the state-owned Venezuelan Conviasa airline began direct flights between Caracas and Damascus as part of an initiative to boost **Latin American**-Arab relations. Washington expressed concern regarding the airline's poor security, claiming that passengers traveling to Syria and **Iran** were not subject to standard immigration and customs controls. Reports also circulated that Caracas was transporting weapons shipments to Tehran through Conviasa. Venezuela denied the allegations and claimed that the commercial flights were designed to promote efficient **transportation** between countries who had shared diplomatic relations for more than 50 years. In September 2010, the airline abruptly canceled all scheduled flights amid accusations that Conviasa was being used to transport weapons and **terrorists** into the Middle East.

In June 2010, **Bashar al-Asad** paid his respects to Chávez during a Latin American tour aimed at advancing investment opportunities for Syria. Since Chávez's first state visit to Syria in 2006, the two countries had increased collaboration in **agriculture, energy, tourism, and trade**. On this visit, Asad formalized cooperation agreements to increase joint business ventures between Syrian and Venezuelan entrepreneurs. When Chávez visited Syria for the third time in four years in October 2010, Asad announced that Syria would participate as an observer-state in the Venezuelan-sponsored Bolivarian Alliance of the Americas, an anti-American pact consisting of eight countries seeking to limit U.S. influence in global affairs.

In the early stages of the **Syrian Uprising**, President Chávez, having developed close ties with anti-Western regimes in Iran, Syria, and Libya, expressed his full support for President Asad and reprimanded Washington for intervening in Syrian affairs, accusing the Obama administration of fomenting uprisings as an excuse to intervene, just as it had done, according to Chávez, in Libya. He blamed Damascus's unrest on terrorists and criticized the international community for pressuring Asad to refrain from using violence against protests.

W

WAHHABI MOVEMENT. A religious reform movement that arose in central Arabia during the second half of the 18th century and inspired by the teachings of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab. Around 1745, Muhammad ibn Sa`ud, the ruler of a small oasis town, lent the movement his support, and he in turn received its blessing for a campaign to expand his realm. Since that time, the Saudis' political fortunes and the Wahhabi teachings have been inextricably connected. Ibn Abd al-Wahhab advanced a rigorous interpretation of **Islamic** belief and practice, and his followers regarded **Ottoman** rule as illegitimate because it countenanced religious practices that they, the Wahhabis, deemed idolatrous.

The Wahhabis impinged on Syrian history in the 1790s by raiding villages south of **Damascus**. Then, in 1803, they seized Mecca and forced the return of the pilgrim caravan from Damascus. This amounted to a direct challenge to Ottoman authority because the governors of Damascus were responsible for the safe conduct of the pilgrimage. Between 1803 and 1813, the Wahhabis restricted access to Mecca and occasionally blocked Syrian **trade**. In 1807, the governor of Damascus, Abd Allah Pasha al-Azm, attempted to conduct the annual pilgrimage by force, but the Wahhabis turned him back before he reached Medina. The pilgrimage of the following year was also turned back, and, to add insult to injury, **Bedouin** plundered the retreating caravan. Three years later the Wahhabis raided villages in the **Hawran**. Then, in 1811, the Ottomans persuaded the powerful governor of **Egypt**, **Muhammad Ali**, to invade Arabia and evict the Wahhabis from the holy cities.

In addition to applying military pressure on Syria, the Wahhabis tried to attract Muslims to their reformist teachings by corresponding with the Ottoman governor and the **ulama** of Damascus, urging them to suppress prostitution, card playing, tobacco, storytelling in **coffeehouses**, and **music**. The ulama admitted the presence of sinners but asserted that their religious practice was perfectly proper and that it was the Wahhabis who needed instruction in **religion** and that they must cease all violence against fellow Muslims. Nonetheless, Wahhabi propaganda did have effects in Damascus, as when

the Ottoman governor decreed that **Christians** had to wear black garments and **Jews** had to don red clothes. In the end, Wahhabi propaganda made no real inroads in Syria. The movement did revive in Arabia, however, and at the beginning of the 20th century, Wahhabi fervor played a central part in the foundation of the modern nation of **Saudi Arabia**. The teachings of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab are the foundation for that country's interpretation and application of Islamic law (**shari`a**).

WANNUS, SA'DALLAH AL- (1941–1997). The country's foremost contemporary playwright and a prominent theorist of Arab drama. Wannus first made his mark with a play entitled *Evening Party for the 5th of June*, a furious condemnation of the Arab political and social order that he and other Arabs held responsible for their stunning defeat in the **June 1967 War**. The play was first performed in **Damascus** in 1971, shortly after **Hafiz al-Asad** seized power from the **Neo-Ba`th** regime that had led Syria to defeat in 1967. In this and later plays, Wannus strove to instill a critically engaged political consciousness in his audiences by placing actors among the audience and by using Syrian dialect, improvisational dialogue, and other techniques borrowed from Western avant-garde **theater**. Until his untimely death, Wannus was a leading figure in Syrian theater, which is one of the liveliest in the Arab world.

Waqf. An institution that, under Islamic law (**shari`a**), provides for dedicating revenue from endowed property to a charitable purpose. For centuries, Muslim donors created these permanent endowments to support the construction and maintenance of mosques, fountains for prayer ablutions, **madrasas**, and hospitals (**bimaristans**). The endowed properties included bathhouses, workshops, warehouses, shops, **coffeehouses**, gardens, orchards, and crops. The waqf appeared in early **Islamic** times, and it is richly documented for the **Ottoman** era, when hundreds of urban and rural properties became dedicated to the public good. Administration of waqf properties, supervision of the disbursement of revenues, and legal oversight of both were typically handled by experts in religious law, the **ulama**.

WATER. Syria's population depends on water for household consumption, **agricultural** production, electricity generation, and **industrial** use. Most of the countryside is either arid or semiarid, but the northwestern region and the western interior regularly receive enough precipitation to nurture large expanses of rain-fed cultivation. The second major source of water is the country's rivers: the **Euphrates**, **Orontes**, **Khabur**, **Yarmuk**, and **Afrin**. The Euphrates River alone accounts for nearly 90 percent of the country's supply of river water. Syria has constructed more than 140 dams to manage water

for irrigation and electric generation. The **Tabqa Dam** on the Euphrates River is the largest one, followed by the Rastan and Muharda dams on the Orontes. Agriculture uses nearly 95 percent of Syria's water supply, followed by household and industrial use. The most important state agency in managing water resources is the Ministry of Irrigation, followed by the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Housing and Public Services. Syria's rapid rate of population growth exerts pressure on the balance between water supply and demand. Shortages in **Aleppo** and **Damascus** are endemic, particularly during summer months, so that the authorities resorted to rationing that cuts water to households for up to 15 hours per day.

Water is a sensitive factor in Syria's **foreign policy**, particularly with **Turkey** and **Israel**. In view of increasing demand from a young population and a thirsty agricultural sector, Syria needs to reach a definitive water sharing agreement on the Euphrates River with Turkey and **Iraq** and develop efficient conservation methods. With respect to Israel, water is an issue in the **Syrian-Israeli peace talks** because Syria wishes to recover the **Golan Heights** and draw the international boundary in a way that would give it a small foothold on the shore of Lake Tiberias. In the event of a peace treaty, Israel wants assurances that Syria would not interrupt the flow of the **Baniyas River**, a tributary of the upper Jordan River. As for Lake Tiberias, it is Israel's main source of freshwater and, consequently, the Israelis have rejected Syria's proposed boundary.

In the early years of the 21st century, Syria's water supply became a more urgent problem primarily due to reliance on the antiquated irrigation technique of flooding basins rather than adopting drip irrigation and due to government subsidies for such water-intensive crops as cotton and wheat. The country's high rate of population growth has put pressure on supplies, particularly in the cities, where failure to maintain infrastructure has resulted in leaky pipes that lose more than half the water supply. Disruptions to water management systems during the **Syrian Uprising** have caused deterioration in water quality and supply shortages in areas hardest hit by fighting between government and opposition forces, including **Dayr al-Zur**, **Idlib**, **Homs**, **al-Raqqa**, and **Aleppo**. As a result, access to supplies of clean water has become difficult and costly for a large portion of the population. *See also* ENERGY.

WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION. *See* NONCONVENTIONAL WEAPONS.

WOMEN. Studies on the historical and contemporary circumstances of women paying close attention to their social status, economic roles, and legal and political rights have revealed both profound changes in Syrian society in

modern times and significant variation according to setting (rural or urban) and social class. The provisions of **Islamic law (shari`a)** enabled urban women of the middle and upper classes to exercise control over personal wealth and property even though the same law gives male heirs a larger portion of inheritance than females. Historical research indicates that urban women inherited and managed residential and commercial property and engaged in moneylending. They also had control of **agricultural** properties surrounding some of the major towns.

Like other Arab countries in the early 20th century, Syria had magazines published by women addressing a female readership and calling for women's rights in all spheres. Various women's organizations pursued equal access to **education** and improved public **health**. During the long term, these publishing and organizing efforts have borne fruit. Educated urban women have participated in Syrian political endeavors ranging from resistance against the imposition of **French** rule to demonstrations on labor issues. Suffrage was first debated in the **Syrian Congress** under **Amir Faysal** in 1920, and it was granted in September 1949.

Ba`th Party regimes created more opportunities for women in education and the paid **labor force**. In 1967, the party created the General Union of Syrian Women to promote education and child care programs. Government efforts to raise literacy rates for girls yielded significant results. The female literacy rate rose to 74 percent because of compulsory elementary education for all children. Another indication of efforts to equalize girls' access to education is that girls comprise almost half of pupils in primary and secondary schools. The percentage of women university graduates reached around 40 percent in 2012. Women's participation in the labor force is difficult to gauge with exactitude because of the informal division of labor in agriculture, where much work is unpaid and thus not counted. Since the 1960s, the ratio of women in the urban work force has grown to about one-fifth and now includes professions, as well as unskilled labor. In the years leading up to the **Syrian Uprising**, women lost ground in education and the workplace, perhaps due to widespread economic distress caused by a serious **drought** that devastated large swaths of rural Syria.

Syria is like most other Arab countries in preserving a traditional legal framework for such matters as marriage, divorce, custody, and inheritance. The minimum marriage age is 17 years old. A Muslim man may have as many as four wives at a time, but a woman may specify the marriage contract to require the man to obtain her permission to take an additional wife. Men also have an easier time obtaining a divorce than do women, who must have specific grounds, for instance, abandonment or insanity. The mother has presumptive custody for boys until age nine and for girls until age 11. Outside the legal sphere, conservative customs in rural areas, and to a lesser extent in the cities, maintain the notion that any behavior that compromises a

woman's moral purity reflects on her **family**. As in other Arab countries, there are still **honor killings**, in which a male relative puts to death a female relative for even the suspicion of sexual misconduct. On the other hand, in some circles, norms are changing, as indicated by the recognition that domestic violence against women is a social problem, not a matter of custom.

In the arena of political leadership, women have made modest strides since the 1970s. A few women have won seats in the National Assembly. President **Bashar al-Asad** appointed the first woman to a cabinet position in 2000, when he named **Najah al-Attar** minister of culture. In 2003, he appointed **Buthayna Sha'ban** to the cabinet as minister of expatriates. He later made her his political and media adviser and official spokesperson, while Attar became one of three vice presidents. Bashar's wife, **Asma al-Akhras al-Asad**, has adopted a higher profile in contrast to the wife of **Hafiz al-Asad**, who preserved her privacy. Asma has tried to make a point of representing the modern face of Western-educated Syrian womanhood, but in the eyes of many, she is part of a **corrupt** elite that is out of touch with ordinary Syrians.

The future role of women is bound up with the outcome of the **Syrian Uprising** because the contending political forces include proponents of imposing puritanical Islamic norms that would severely restrict women's public roles, as well as liberal reformers who espouse progressive social values.

WORLD WAR I. On 14 November 1914, the **Ottoman Empire** entered the war on the side of Germany against **Great Britain, France, and Russia**. Syria suffered tremendous hardship during the war because the Ottomans stripped the provinces of food and labor to support the military effort. Furthermore, the Ottomans subjected Syria to a strict political regime under **Jamal Pasha**, who ordered the executions of several **Arab nationalists**. Nonetheless, public sentiment generally favored the Ottomans, and no general uprising for independence took place in Syria.

During the war, Ottoman atrocities and deportation orders drove thousands of **Armenians** from central and eastern Anatolia into northern Syria. From these tragic events stems modern Syria's substantial Armenian population. Toward the end of the war, a British offensive launched from **Egypt** in December 1917 occupied southern **Palestine** and Jerusalem. Then, in September 1918, **Hashemite** forces advanced through **Transjordan** while an allied column marched toward **Damascus**. On 30 September, the Ottoman army withdrew from Damascus and the same evening saw the arrival of Arab troops. The following day, an Arab government under **Amir Faysal** was proclaimed, bringing to an end more than four centuries of Ottoman rule. A few weeks later, **Aleppo** fell to Anglo-Arab forces on 26 October.

WORLD WAR II. At the outbreak of the war, Syria had been under the rule of the **French Mandate** for nearly two decades, during which time the movement for independence had gained widespread support; however, the various nationalist parties and organizations declared their support for **France** in its wartime efforts. When France fell to German forces in June 1940, the Vichy regime appointed General Henri Dentz high commissioner for Syria, but, in June–July 1941, **Great Britain** and Free French forces under Charles de Gaulle launched an invasion of Syria and **Lebanon** from **Palestine** that removed the Vichy regime and placed Syria under a Free French administration. At the start of the invasion, the commanding French officer issued a proclamation pledging France's commitment to granting Syria its independence. The preponderance of British forces in Syria meant that Britain could push the French to make good on their promise, but de Gaulle intended to postpone a final withdrawal, and he suspected that Britain's interest in Syrian independence masked a desire to exploit France's weakness to achieve hegemony in the Levant. Nonetheless, Syrian independence was no longer in question; rather, it was a matter of timing.

Pressures from Britain and Syrian nationalists induced the French to announce national elections for July 1943. **Shukri al-Quwwatli** headed the **National Party** list, which triumphed at the polls, and Quwwatli became the president. There followed a prolonged stalemate between the Syrian and French governments regarding the terms by which France would leave the country. The French insisted on a treaty before evacuating, while the Syrians argued that a treaty should be negotiated afterward. The main sticking point was control of the **Troupes Spéciales du Levant**. In May 1945, anti-French demonstrations erupted throughout Syria. France responded by launching air attacks and shelling on **Damascus** on 29 and 30 May, killing 400 Syrians. Britain intervened by having its troops take control, and international opinion condemned France. In July, the French agreed to cede control of the *Troupes Spéciales* to the Syrian authorities. On 17 April 1946, almost a year after the end of the war in Europe, French troops withdrew from independent Syria.

Y

YARMUK, BATTLE OF. In 636, the **Byzantine** emperor Heraclius responded to the first wave of Arab invasions into southern and central Syria by sending a huge army to regain the lost territories. The Arabs evacuated **Homs** and **Damascus**, which they had only recently occupied, and withdrew southward. Byzantine and Muslim forces gathered near the **Yarmuk River** in the summer of 636. That August, they fought the largest battle in the Arab conquest of Syria. The Arabs routed the Byzantines, thus paving the way for the consolidation of Arab control over Syria without any further serious military resistance.

YARMUK RIVER. The main tributary for the Jordan River and the watershed for a portion of Syria's border with **Jordan**. The Yarmuk River rises in Syria and has a 40-kilometer course before forming the international boundary. Jordan and Syria formally agreed on sharing the river's **waters** in 1955, thus this has not aggravated bilateral relations. In the 1980s and 1990s, Syria constructed a series of dams along *wadis* (dry flood channels) that flow into the Yarmuk to divert water for irrigation. In 1987, Syrian and Jordanian water experts conceived the Unity Dam (255-cubic-meter capacity) project to build a dam that would alleviate Jordan's endemic water shortage.

YAZIDIS. About 12,000 of these non-Muslim **Kurds** live in Jabal Sim'an west of **Aleppo**, Jabal Akrad north of Aleppo, and **Jazira**. The Yazidis, who account for less than 5 percent of all Kurds, came from **Iraq** in the 15th and 16th centuries. There used to be a larger Yazidi community in Syria, but their numbers dwindled under the impact of **Ottoman** persecution. Their **religion** is a vestige of the ancient Kurdish religion Yazdani, or the cult of the angels. They believe in a Universal Spirit that created all spiritual existence, including seven angels. One of those angels, the Peacock Angel, is venerated for having created the material world. The Yazidis also believe in avatars of the Universal Spirit, and they celebrate Shaykh Adi as such an avatar.

Z

ZA`IM, HUSNI AL- (1894–1949). Army officer and president of Syria from 30 March 1949 to 14 August 1949. Born in **Aleppo**, Za`im served in the **Ottoman** army during **World War I**. In the **French Mandate** era, he was an officer in the **Troupes Spéciales du Levant**. As chief of staff, Colonel Za`im led Syria's first military coup on 30 March 1949. The coup sprang from widespread discontent in the army with the government, particularly regarding criticism of the army's performance in the **Palestine War of 1948**. Za`im arrested President **Shukri al-Quwwatli** and Prime Minister **Khalid al-Azm** in a bloodless coup. During the next few days, Za`im tried to convince a number of prominent politicians to form a provisional cabinet, but they turned him down. Thus, on 3 April, he disbanded parliament and promised elections under a new **constitution**. He also pledged to enfranchise **women** and distribute state lands to peasants. While Za`im promised to restore democracy, he banned political parties, barred civil servants from political activities, and suppressed dozens of **newspapers**. One of the more ominous steps Za`im took was to end the Ministry of the Interior's control of the gendarmerie and place it under the Ministry of Defense, thereby giving the military a formal role in domestic affairs. Unable to obtain cooperation from political leaders, Za`im formed a cabinet in which he held the offices of prime minister, minister of interior, and minister of defense.

In **foreign policy**, Za`im first pursued closer economic and military relations with **Iraq**, but **Saudi Arabia** and **Egypt** persuaded him to reject unity with the **Hashemites**. A more pressing problem brewed along the 1949 cease-fire lines. Za`im sent a team of army officers to conduct armistice negotiations (12 April to 20 July) with **Israel**. At one point, he offered to absorb 300,000 **Palestinian refugees** and reach a peace treaty with Israel in return for border adjustments in Syria's favor. Israel rejected his offer because of its desire to control **water** resources along the frontier with Syria.

By August the roster of Za`im's opponents included partisans of the **Syrian Social National Party (SSNP)** upset at Za`im's betrayal of their leader, **Antun al-Sa`ada**; **Druze** officers who distrusted the colonel's deployment of troops in **Jabal Druze**; and the Iraqi government. More generally, his grow-

ing arrogance and pomposity deeply offended public opinion. On 14 August 1949, Colonel **Sami al-Hinnawi** led a military coup to depose Za'im. A Druze lieutenant and partisan of the SSNP arrested Za'im at his residence and carried out the order to execute him and his civilian associate, Muhsin al-Barazi.

ZANGI, IMAD AL-DIN AL- (1087–1146). Atabeg for the **Saljuk** prince of Mosul. Zangi ruled **Aleppo** from 1128 until 1146. After taking over Aleppo, he resolved to extend his rule to the rest of Muslim Syria, leaving the coast under **Crusader** rule. This ambition involved him in several campaigns that eventually brought **Hama** and **Homs** under his rule, but the Atabegs of **Damascus** defied him. In Muslim annals, Zangi is best known for his 1144 conquest of the County of Edessa, the first Frankish state to fall to Muslim reconquest.

ZANGID. A line of 12th-century Muslim rulers in Syria and northern **Iraq** descended from the Atabeg **Imad al-Din al-Zangi**. The most prominent figure in this illustrious line was **Nur al-Din Mahmud**, the ruler who reunified most of Syria after three centuries of fragmentation. The other Zangid rulers of Iraq and Syria helped pave the way for an era of urban efflorescence marked by construction of public buildings and patronage of **Sunni** institutions.

ZAYNAB BINT ALI. Known as “Sitt Zaynab.” Zaynab was the daughter of **Ali ibn Abi Talib** and Fatima, the Muslim prophet Muhammad’s daughter. Thus, she was his granddaughter and a member of **Shi’ism’s** Holy Family. Her more famous brothers, Hasan and Husayn, are Shi’ism’s second and third **imams**. According to Shi’i lore, she was present at the battle of Karbala in 680, when **Umayyad** forces martyred her brother Husayn. She is reported to have rescued his only son, Ali Zayn al-‘Abidin, from execution at the hands of an Umayyad governor. Her captors transported her to **Damascus**, where she is supposed to have been the first person to conduct the ritual of lamenting Husayn. In the Shi’i tradition, Zaynab expresses unvanquished defiance of illegitimate Umayyad tyranny. Her splendid mausoleum outside Damascus is a pilgrimage destination for Shi’i Muslims from **Iran**, **Lebanon**, **Pakistan**, and **Afghanistan**. In recent years, it has drawn 100,000 Iranian pilgrims annually. In accordance with the Shi’i belief in the powers of Ali’s family to possess powers of intercession, pilgrims customarily recite a salutation to Zaynab to obtain her blessing, especially for **women** seeking to have children or to heal ailments.

ZAYZUN DAM. In 1996, Syria added a new dam to its network of hydraulic projects designed to draw on the **Orontes River** to irrigate thirsty fields. Just six years later, in June 2002, the Zayzun Dam burst. In the ensuing flood, Zayzun village was destroyed, but its 1,000 inhabitants were spared because cracks in the dam had been noticed and the local **imam** broadcast an evacuation order from the mosque just an hour before the dam broke. Villagers living farther along the path of the flood had no warning, and more than 20 people perished. The disaster inundated 10,000 acres, including cultivated fields, thus it ruined crops for thousands of farmers. Four villages downstream in the **Idlib** governorate suffered extensive damage to buildings and fields. The dam was only six years old, but the **public-sector** companies that operated it had failed to carry out regular inspection and maintenance. Furthermore, villagers reported that the dam's managers had allowed it to fill beyond capacity to extract a higher price for **water**. Authorities took the drastic step of arresting a former minister of irrigation and manager of the company that had constructed the dam. In the eyes of many Syrians, the disaster was a symptom of the sort of bureaucratic ineptitude and public-sector **corruption** that the country's leaders were failing to address.

ZU' AYYIN, YUSUF AL- (1931–). Medical doctor and member of the **Neo-Ba'th** regime of 1966 to 1970. **Salah al-Jadid** had appointed Zu'ayyin, a **Sunni** from the **Euphrates River** town of Abu Kamal, prime minister in the first Ba'thist regime in August 1965. He retained the post in the Neo-Ba'th regime from 1966 until **Hafiz al-Asad** forced his resignation in October 1968. After Asad came to power in November 1970, he had Zu'ayyin imprisoned until 1981, when he was allowed to leave the country and settle in Hungary.

ZU'BI, MAHMUD AL- (1938–2000). Prime minister of Syria from October 1987 to March 2000. Zu'bi had been speaker of the People's Assembly and was a veteran member of the **Ba'th Party**. He assumed office at a time of deep economic problems marked by **inflation**, electricity cuts, shortages in essential commodities, and a foreign exchange crisis. His government proceeded with cautious implementation of a policy called "relaxation," a term intended to distinguish Syria's economic liberalization from the more thorough campaign undertaken in **Egypt** and other Arab countries since the 1970s. The economic crisis gradually subsided, and Zu'bi remained in office longer than any prime minister under **Hafiz al-Asad**.

Zu'bi's term came to a sudden and ignominious end in March 2000. Shortly after his dismissal, he became the target of an investigation on embezzlement charges. He was the highest-ranking government or Ba'th Party official to face **corruption** charges in a campaign headed by Asad's son, **Bashar al-**

Asad. Two months later, Zu`bi was expelled from the Ba`th Party National Command. On 21 May, he reportedly committed suicide, but observers speculate that the government killed him to prevent him from exposing widespread corruption in the highest levels of the regime.

The Syrian Uprising

The Syrian Uprising was part of the revolutionary wave that swept the Arab world in 2010–2011. The success of demonstrations in Egypt and Tunisia at toppling long-ruling autocrats encouraged Arabs in other countries to air grievances and demand fundamental political change. Antigovernment demonstrations in Syria were not simply a matter of imitating restless youth elsewhere. Rather, they represented long-simmering discontent with multiple shortcomings of Bashar al-Asad's regime: rampant corruption; stifling censorship; a dreadful human rights record; unaccountable government officials; and economic distress owing to inflation, unemployment, and a devastating drought that wracked the country's breadbasket region. As late as 2010, Syrians and experts on Syria were divided regarding whether President Bashar al-Asad was a genuine reformer whose liberalizing inclinations were stymied by inflexible security and Ba'th Party officials. Skeptics considered his declared intentions to reform a tactic to perpetuate authoritarian rule, which appeared to be as deeply entrenched and unshakable as ever.

BACKGROUND TO THE UPRISING

In late January 2011, the *Wall Street Journal* published an interview with President Asad in which he described Syria as immune to the Arab Spring. While he acknowledged that protests in Egypt, Tunisia, and Yemen were ushering in a new era of reform for the Middle East, he believed Syria would be different. Asad had enjoyed considerable popularity during his early years in office, in part because many regarded him as an earnest reformer who understood the frustrations and aspirations of the population at large. During his decade in office, Asad had maintained stability and introduced economic reforms aimed at expanding the economy's private sector. He survived Western-imposed isolation while upholding Syria's status as a key regional power. In addition, Asad felt that he, along with Hamas and Hizballah, carried the torch of nationalist resistance to Israeli domination, and therefore enjoyed popular backing, as opposed to Arab leaders allied with the United States, including Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak and Tunisian president Zayn al-Abidin Ben Ali.

In his interview, Asad gave no hint that he grasped how frustrated ordinary Syrians were with the challenges of maintaining decent living standards and dealing with an inefficient bureaucracy, while the well-connected prospered thanks to a patronage system centered on the ruling family. Reform initiatives and campaigns against corruption made little headway since members of the Syrian political and economic elite with ties to the Asad family would not relinquish the perquisites of power. In 2008, a state-sponsored survey indicated that nearly all Syrians believed government departments were nests of venality and fraud. That same year, Transparency International released a report ranking Syria's administration and bureaucracy the second most corrupt in the Middle East and North Africa.

Promises to improve the country's human rights record were also unfulfilled. Shortly after Asad came to power in 2000, he announced measures to broaden individual rights, particularly freedom of speech. The Damascus Spring, when Syrians enjoyed greater freedom of assembly and expression, was short-lived because hard-liners in the regime feared it could unleash an uncontrollable wave of political demands. The U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003 and Western pressure on the regime due to the February 2005 assassination of former Lebanese prime minister Rafiq al-Hariri engendered a sense that Syria was under siege that fed the government's view of dissent as an instrument in the hands of foreign enemies. When external pressure did let up in 2008, the regime did not go any easier on advocates for political reforms. It was no wonder that when protests spread in spring 2011, Asad's promises to implement changes *this time* lacked credibility. After 11 years of broken pledges, most Syrians were convinced that the regime was authoritarian and corrupt to the core.

In one area, the economy, Asad did carry out some initiatives designed to expand the private sector for the sake of generating growth rates sufficient to expand employment for the country's large youth bulge. A stock market opened in Damascus, some private banks were created, tourism developed, and a few public-private enterprises got off the ground, but the primary effect of partial economic liberalization was to accentuate class divisions. Crony capitalists—members, relatives, and friends of the ruling family—exploited their positions to take over the most profitable enterprises and flaunted their wealth, while the urban middle class barely held on, and tens of thousands of rural Syrians were driven off the land by a prolonged, devastating drought.

ARAB UPRISINGS

Revolutionary movements appear inevitable only in hindsight. In 2010, experts on Arab politics were refining models of “upgraded” authoritarianism to account for the durability of the region’s assortment of strongman regimes. Then, on 17 December 2010, a street vendor in an obscure central Tunisian town set himself on fire to protest the seizure of his fruit cart by the police. Antigovernment protests erupted in numerous towns and engulfed the country for weeks. On 14 January 2011, the army ordered President Zayn al-Abidin Ben Ali to leave the country. By the end of the month, activists in Egypt were staging massive demonstrations in downtown Cairo’s Tahrir Square, and protests were spreading in Yemen. On 11 February, the Egyptian Army forced President Husni Mubarak to step down. In the next few days, the revolutionary spark ignited in Bahrain and Libya. Despite President Asad’s conviction that Syria was immune to the wave of popular uprisings, large segments of the country not only wished to be free of its corrupt, repressive regime, but proved willing to risk their lives to demand its fall.

DAR`A: CRADLE OF THE UPRISING

On 6 March, schoolchildren in the southern town of Dar`a were arrested for painting graffiti on their school, spelling out the slogan of the Arab uprisings, “The people want the fall of the regime.” The detainees were held at the local branch of Political Security, one of Syria’s dreaded secret police organizations. While family members tried to ascertain their whereabouts, guards under the command of Asad’s cousin, Atif Najib, the head of Political Security in Dar`a, subjected the boys to brutal torture. On 15 March, approximately 200 protesters gathered before al-Umari Mosque, the main religious center in town, to demand the release of the detainees and call for broad reform of the government. On 18 March, Dar`a was the scene of large protests, which the government responded to with lethal force, killing three protesters. Two days later, a furious crowd burned the Ba`th Party office. In an effort to calm the situation, President Asad sent a delegation of government officials to meet with aggrieved families and agreed to release the 15 detained schoolchildren. As people saw and reported the signs of torture they had endured, antigovernment fury intensified and protests swelled in size. Demonstrators had taken sanctuary in al-Umari Mosque, and, on 22 March, government forces took it by force, killing another six townspeople.

FROM PROTEST TO CIVIL WAR

The March events in Dar'a established a pattern that repeated itself in cities and towns throughout the country. Each Friday, demonstrators would gather and chant demands for political change. Nonviolent protests were met with a combination of brutal repression and conciliatory gestures. President Asad's formula for political reform consisted of amending the constitution, holding a referendum on the amended document, and then parliamentary elections. For too many Syrians, these steps were far too little, far too late. Meanwhile, hundreds of political dissidents and human rights activists were arrested, held incommunicado, and subjected to torture. Activists were forced to sign documents renouncing their beliefs and pledging to refrain from future demonstrations before being released. In some cases, security forces detained entire families affiliated with activists the regime deemed to be particularly threatening.

In the first few weeks of the protests there unfolded a duel between local grassroots activists holding demonstrations calling for fundamental political reform and security forces bent on suppressing dissent in the name of restoring stability and order. Regime brutality failed to cow citizens; instead, it fueled popular anger already brewing because of dire economic conditions and a suffocating political life. By the end of April, the regime reinforced plainclothes security forces and irregular militiamen by sending heavily armed troops to several cities. As the death toll mounted into the hundreds, more Syrian civilians took up arms, at first to protect demonstrators from regime forces, but later to carry out attacks on checkpoints, troop transports, and government targets. In July, defectors from the Syrian Army joined with local self-defense volunteers under the banner of the Free Syrian Army, a name assumed by independently operating local militias.

In 2012, the uprising increasingly assumed the contours of a civil war. In February and March, the regime turned to the regular army to stamp out the opposition, starting with towns on the outskirts of Damascus. For most of March, rebels in the Baba Amr neighborhood in central Homs resisted fierce shelling by tanks and mortar fire before pulling back from the heavily damaged quarter. That same month saw bombings of government buildings in Damascus and Aleppo that killed dozens of bystanders. When the siege and destruction of Baba Amr did not trigger international intervention, rebel leaders decided to take the fight to Damascus. In May, rebel fighters infiltrated a number of suburbs and then carried out assassinations and bombings before the government counterattacked with clearing operations. The escalating spiral of violence doomed the faint hope that moderates in the government and the opposition might be able to spare the country a bloody civil war by negotiating in good faith.

REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL POWERS

The stalemate inside Syria was matched by deadlock among foreign powers. The Middle East was split down the middle between the Asad regime and the opposition. By 2010, Asad had steered the country into a firm alliance with Iran, Hizballah, and Hamas, the “axis of resistance,” so named for their opposition to the United States and Israel. In large measure, the rivalry between Iran and Saudi Arabia infected regional politics with the germ of Sunni–Shi‘i sectarianism; consequently, relations between Damascus and Riyadh, along with the other Gulf Arab states, deteriorated as the Saudis came to see the Asad regime as an agent of Iranian influence in the Arab world.

Predictably, Iran and Hizballah lent strong support to the Asad regime, at the risk of reigniting sectarian strife in Lebanon. Indeed, Lebanese Sunni militants volunteered to fight alongside Syrians against an enemy painted as heretical Shi‘is. Likewise, reactions in Iraq largely followed sectarian logic, as the Shi‘i-dominated government leaned toward the regime, while Sunnis tended to sympathize with the opposition. Sectarianism also affected Asad’s relationship with a perennial ally, the Palestinian Islamist party Hamas. At first, its leadership in Damascus sat on the fence, but grassroots support for Syria’s mostly Sunni opposition forced the leaders to jettison their longstanding relationship with the Asad regime.

Turkey was Syria’s most important neighbor to support the opposition. Prime Minister Recep Erdogan initially believed that his government’s steps to improve relations with the Asad regime would allow him to influence its response to demonstrators. That expectation proved illusory, and Erdogan made a decisive shift to support the opposition, making Turkey a crucial conduit for supplies to arm the rebels. The Gulf states, particularly Saudi Arabia and Qatar, also gave their backing to the rebels, choosing different factions and rebel groups in an extension of their own rivalry.

Israel kept a wary eye on developments in Syria, its most immediate concern being the disposition of chemical weapons and ballistic missiles. The Israeli government most certainly did not wish to see these dangerous weapons fall into the hands of either Hizballah or Islamist rebels, nor did it relish the prospect of Syria’s disintegration and conversion into a failed state susceptible to infiltration by al-Qa`ida or its friends. For the most part, the Israeli leadership kept close watch and said little about the course of the power struggle inside its northern neighbor, but it did carry out attacks on Syrian government forces to prevent the transfer of missiles to Hizballah in January and May 2013, and it also pressured the United States to act when it believed there was strong evidence that the Syrian regime had used chemical weapons.

Outside the Middle East, the United States and European Union (EU) did not take long to lend their backing to the opposition, while Russia and China shielded the regime from United Nations (UN) Security Council resolutions that might have justified outside intervention. Moscow played a more active role than Beijing in bolstering Asad's position with diplomatic support and military supplies. Given the conflicting positions of the permanent members of the Security Council, international diplomatic efforts were severely hamstrung. Arab League and UN initiatives in 2011 and 2012 completely failed to resolve the political crisis and stop the country's slide into civil war. On one side, the regime was bent on holding on to power, rejecting any suggestion that Asad step down. On the other side, the opposition refused to cease protests and resistance but was too fragmented to combine efforts, as it consisted of a collection of dissidents, local grassroots activists, and militant cells inside the country, as well as a bewildering array of secular, religious, Arab, and Kurdish parties in exile.

The United States and the EU joined with the anti-Asad Arab bloc and Turkey in efforts to establish a viable political opposition capable of steering resources to groups that were bearing the brunt of government repression inside the country. Initiatives by Arab and Western governments to create a unified organization that represented the spectrum of opposition groups fell short. First, a coalition called the Syrian National Council (SNC), formed in October 2011, proved incapable of leveraging international recognition into effective political, financial, or military support for opposition forces inside the country. Then, a second organization, the National Coalition of Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces, formed in November 2012, at the behest of Arab and Western backers, also failed to provide the platform for a combined effort of outside and inside forces with political and military resources. Nevertheless, rebel forces organized into local fighting units were able to seize control of towns and city neighborhoods in much of the country. Regime efforts to expel rebel forces sometimes entailed destroying residential areas rather than recapturing them and reestablishing government control.

THE PULL OF SECTARIANISM

The regime and Islamist opposition groups viewed the conflict through sectarian lenses, turning a struggle between authoritarian and liberal political visions into a communal war pitting Sunnis against Alawis and Shi'is. The alignment of regional powers was congruent with a sectarian reading of the conflict, as Shi'i Iran and Hizballah backed the "Alawi" regime against Sunni Arab states and rebel forces, even though such a reading meant forcing

roughly the one-fifth of Syria's population that is not Sunni into the arms of a regime that treated them as pawns. The Alawis, in particular, were hostage to the fortunes of the Asad family. The majority of Alawis were not beneficiaries of preferential treatment; most Alawi villages and towns in the northwest were as backward and poor as largely Sunni villages and towns in the country's neglected periphery. For many young Alawi men, low-paying jobs in the security forces were the only way out of rural poverty. The Alawis knew as well as other Syrians how the ruling elite used its power to plunder the economy, and although only a handful belonged to that elite, in the sectarian narrative, the Alawis as a whole were implicated in the failings and crimes of the regime.

THE OUTLOOK

Given the failure of opposition groups to establish a transitional political authority that international backers could assist, so-called liberated areas were free of government control but sorely in need of humanitarian relief in the way of medical supplies, food, and restoration of electric and water supplies. Much of the country's health, energy, and education infrastructures were coming apart, either due to direct destruction in warfare or lack of maintenance as the government poured all resources into its struggle to crush the uprising. By the end of 2012, insecurity due to fighting and deterioration in living conditions had gotten so bad that larger and larger numbers of Syrians were fleeing their villages, towns, and urban quarters, giving rise to huge numbers of internally displaced people and refugees seeking haven in neighboring countries and putting strains on international capacity to address a fast-growing humanitarian crisis. By mid-2013, more than a quarter of the country's population was either displaced (4.5 million) or refugees (1.5 million).

By July 2013, rebels controlled large swaths of territory in Syria's north and east, including most of the border posts along the Turkey and Iraq boundaries. During normal times, perhaps 40 percent of the country's population lived in areas under rebel control, although those were also the locales of highest flight due to destruction and fighting. There was no end to the fighting on the horizon, as both government and opposition viewed the struggle as one that could only end in total victory for its side, and the deep divisions among foreign powers both fueled the fighting and made it impossible to undertake effective international intervention. Consequently, Syria was stuck in a grinding civil war that would continue to exact a high toll in human life and physical destruction. Whether one side or the other prevailed in the short or long run, rebuilding the economy and the capacity to govern would take

many years. The prospect of Syria becoming a failed state, divided into fiefdoms ruled by militias, seemed just as likely as one side or the other winning the civil war. Moreover, there loomed the possibility that Syria's turmoil could set off a regional war due to border tensions with Turkey and Israel, reignite sectarian strife in Lebanon and Iraq, or spark broader hostilities involving Israel, Hizballah, and Iran.

CHRONOLOGY

2011

26 January: Twenty-six-year-old Hasan Ali Akla, a resident from al-Hasaka, pours gasoline on his body and sets himself on fire. His action is intended to imitate the self-immolation of Tunisian protester Muhammad Bouazizi; however, the protest is directed at the Syrian regime. Akla's actions are not fully appreciated until several months later, when massive demonstrations appear in major cities throughout Syria.

4 February: Social media sites throughout Syria call for a "Day of Rage" to take place in downtown Damascus in what is intended to be a massive display of opposition against the government, but in contrast to Tunisia and Egypt, only a small crowd shows up. Observers believe that a number of factors have accounted for the failure to mount a large demonstration. First, President Asad recently announced a 17-percent pay raise for government employees, making individuals employed by the state less likely to protest. Second, fear of government reprisal is still an effective deterrent. As of February, several activists were being detained for trying to prepare political protests. The Syrian Uprising, which would break out six weeks later, erupts among deprived populations in the provinces, not among urban youths using social networking to mobilize.

19 February: President Asad lifts restrictions on Facebook and YouTube; critics of the regime assert that doing so makes it easier for the authorities to keep online activists under surveillance.

22 February: Tensions mount in Damascus when 200 citizens hold a demonstration outside the Libyan embassy to protest the Asad regime's support for Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi. As civilians begin chanting "freedom for the people" and "traitors are those that beat their people," security forces, who outnumber the demonstrators, use batons and nightsticks to disperse the crowd. Fourteen protesters are arrested and several badly beaten, including

two young women who are allegedly struck in the face. The Libyan embassy demonstration foreshadows the violent tone that would accompany the Syrian Uprising.

6 March: Security forces in Dar'a arrest 15 schoolchildren for spraying graffiti calling for the fall of the regime, the mantra of Arab Spring protesters.

15 March: Around 200 people gather in front of the Interior Ministry building in Damascus to present a petition for the release of political prisoners under indefinite detention. The crowd is comprised of activists, journalists, university students, and family members of the detainees. Dressed in plain clothing, security officers infiltrate the demonstration and shout pro-Asad slogans to provoke clashes. When protesters begin raising pictures of incarcerated relatives, police diffuse the rally by beating protesters with batons. At least 34 demonstrators are arrested.

18 March: On the "Friday of Dignity," the first nationwide political protests erupt since the outbreak of anti-regime demonstrations in Tunisia and Egypt. Large crowds march in the southern town of Dar'a in response to the detention of 15 schoolchildren for scribbling antiregime slogans on school walls. The boys had been arrested by security forces and held incommunicado for several weeks. On 18 March, townspeople rally in the streets with the demand that the boys be returned to their parents safely and swiftly. The demonstrations in Dar'a reverberate across Syria, as crowds condemn police brutality. In Baniyas, Homs, and Damascus, thousands of people gather chanting such pro-democracy slogans as "God, Syria, and freedom only!" Security forces respond with lethal force as guards shoot into large crowds of unarmed civilians. Several Syrians are killed, and numerous video clips illustrating the violent crackdown are posted online. Syria's state news agency reports that security forces responded to acts of sabotage committed by protesters.

19 March: A crowd of approximately 20,000 gathers in Dar'a to honor victims of the previous day's confrontations with security forces. Protesters call for the removal of the mayor and police chief. The regime once again responds with forceful suppression.

20 March: Angry crowds burn the Ba'th Party headquarters in Dar'a; police fire on demonstrators and kill one person. People take wounded demonstrators to al-Umari Mosque, which becomes a focal point of the protest.

22 March: Government forces attack and seize control of al-Umari Mosque.

24 March: President Asad responds to the week's disturbances by removing the provincial governor, promising raises to government employees, and pledging to consider lifting the Emergency Law and restrictions on the media.

25 March: On the "Friday of Glory," thousands of citizens take to the streets in mass demonstrations throughout the country. Media sources confirm protests in Dar'a, Damascus, Homs, Latakia, and Hama. Despite promises by Presidential Advisor Buthayna Sha'ban that the government will respond with restraint, live ammunition and tear gas are used to disperse crowds. In contrast to the prodemocracy slogans a week earlier, protesters are now calling for the fall of the regime. As the death toll mounts, popular dissent spreads fast. The government's violent response to the first few demonstrations fails to quell the protests and, in fact, seems to have the opposite effect. Syrian officials are forced to acknowledge the growing threat that public demands might pose to the regime.

29 March: As a concession to protesters demanding political reforms, President Asad dissolves the cabinet and announces his intention to lift the Emergency Law. He replaces 15 of more than 30 ministers. For a government that rarely responds to public pressure, Asad's acquiescence to the demands of activists is a gesture intended to give the impression that he is willing to implement political reform. On 3 April, Asad announces the appointment of Syria's new prime minister, former Minister of Agriculture Adil Safar. The politician is a strategic selection, as Safar has kept a relatively low profile and managed to distance himself from corruption scandals throughout his years in government. The new cabinet members are sworn into office on 16 April.

30 March: President Asad gives a speech in which he blames the unrest on a foreign conspiracy and says that the government will consider instituting political reforms.

1 April: On the "Friday of Martyrs," Protesters choose to name the day in honor of the dozens of Syrians killed in the previous two weeks of demonstrations. Thousands of protesters take to the streets in what proves to be another Friday of discontent throughout the nation. Massive demonstrations take place in Damascus and Dar'a; however, suburbs of the capital city, particularly Duma, bear the brunt of government reprisal. Security forces raid working-class quarters to search for demonstrators believed to be seeking refuge.

8 April: On the "Friday of Resistance," tens of thousands of Syrians fill the streets after Friday prayers in Dar'a, Latakia, Tartus, Idlib, Baniyas, al-Qamishli, Homs, and several suburbs near Damascus. Security forces, dressed in

civilian clothing, attempt to infiltrate demonstrations and disorient protesters marching toward city squares. Police dissipate crowds using rubber bullets, stun guns, batons, and live ammunition. Hundreds of people gather around downtown centers and are badly wounded. Kurdish protesters also congregate in full force to protest President Asad's reforms, which have not satisfied widespread demands. According to reports, security forces kill more than 27 people in that single afternoon.

15 April: On the "Friday of Determination," thousands of protesters hold demonstrations in Baniyas, Latakia, Bayda, Homs, and Dayr al-Zur. Just fewer than 50,000 people march through Syria's capital city, with residents pouring in from surrounding suburbs. Despite new concessions from President Asad, protesters chant "Freedom! Freedom!" while carrying olive branches. Slogans and banners call for the fall of the regime, signaling a rejection of the president's reform initiatives. In Damascus, marchers reach Abbassiyin Square, where security forces meet them with tear gas, gunfire, and beatings; these forceful but less lethal means than those used in previous days result in fewer deaths. The death toll is the lowest for Friday demonstrations in the early months of the uprising. The government's change in tactics appears to have signaled a new approach aimed at reducing violence.

19 April: The new cabinet announces the repeal of the Emergency Law and the dissolution of the state security courts, with no discernible effect on the actions of security forces executing a policy of repression to deal with peaceful demonstrations.

22 April: On "Great Friday," one month after the first demonstrations were held, Syria experiences its largest and deadliest series of clashes between protesters and security forces. An estimated 75 to 110 people were killed in at least 20 cities throughout the nation. In Damascus, thousands gather around mosques after noon prayers calling for the resignation of President Asad and vengeance for those killed in earlier weeks. Protesters go further than before in expressing animosity toward the regime, tearing down posters of the president and toppling statues of his father, Hafiz al-Asad. Security forces fire into large crowds and beat demonstrators until the crowds dispersed.

25 April: The regime escalates its response to widespread unrest by sending tanks and armored personnel carriers to several towns, including Dar'a.

28 April: Several dozen members of the Ba`th Party resign in objection to the government's brutal crackdown on protesters.

29 April: On the "Friday of Solidarity with Dar'a," several thousand protesters pack the streets in Aleppo, Homs, Dayr al-Zur, and Damascus, among other cities, to show support for the citizens of Dar'a. Mass demonstrations

are held in response to the military operations launched against rebellious towns throughout southern Syria. As army tanks lay siege to Dar'a, opposition groups march in full force in major cities to illustrate the counterproductive nature of government reprisal. Activists report at least 50 dead by the end of the day.

The fates of two teenagers draw broad attention to the regime's extreme brutality. Thirteen-year-old Hamza Ali al-Khatib is arrested during a protest in Jiza, a small town near Dar'a. He is detained for a nearly a month before his mutilated corpse is delivered to his parents by security officers. Family members are warned not to speak of the affair to anyone; however, in grief and defiance, Hamza's father films the young boy's condition and posts the clip online to show the world the brutality of the Syrian security forces. The boy's skin is discolored from several cuts and burns. Bullet holes appear on his legs and torso, wounds that indicate an intention to injure but not kill the child, whose penis has also been cut off. The video of Hamza's mutilated corpse triggers mass demonstrations on 3 June, in honor of children killed during the uprising. Under tremendous domestic and international pressure, Syrian government officials launch an investigation into Hamza's torture and murder. A state report is later released claiming that he had died in an accident at a nearby shooting range and that the video clip released by family members had been distorted to create images of bruises and cuts on the body.

Also on 29 April, 15-year-old Tamar Muhammad al-Shar'i disappears after attending demonstrations in his hometown of Dar'a. His corpse is delivered to his parents several weeks later bearing signs of torture. A bullet wound is visible below the knee, and the skin is completely discolored from burn marks and gashes. Tamar's corpse is filmed and posted on YouTube. He and Hamza attended the same protests and disappeared on the same day, prompting Syrians to conclude that the two instances of death by torture were related.

The United States announces sanctions on three senior Syrian officials involved in violent measures against protesters (Mahir al-Asad, Ali Mamluk, and Atif Najib).

6 May: On the "Friday of Challenge," protests are staged in Homs, Hama, Baniyas, Damascus, and several Kurdish cities located in Syria's northeastern regions. Major activity takes place in the capital and surrounding suburbs, where protesters wear funeral shrouds and carry olive branches to symbolize their intention to demonstrate peacefully, in contrast to the government's willingness to resort to military force. Demonstrators march to the borders of Dar'a, but security forces prohibit civilians from reaching the

besieged city. Activists report that 30 civilians were killed that day, while the state television station recounts that several security officials had been attacked by criminal gangs in Homs.

9 May: The EU announces sanctions against 13 members of the Syrian government and an arms embargo.

13 May: On the “Friday of Free Women,” protesters in Damascus, Homs, Hama, al-Qamishli, and other northeastern Kurdish towns honor the hundreds of women killed or detained in the two-month-old uprising. Despite orders from President Asad not to shoot at demonstrators, six people are killed by security guards and hundreds more injured. Security officials block off central mosques in Damascus to prevent large gatherings. The number of protesters is fewer than in the previous few weeks.

18 May: The United States imposes sanctions on President Asad and six senior officials, including Faruq al-Shara`, Adil Safar, Muhammad al-Sha`r, Ali Habib Mahmud, Abd al-Fattah Qudsiyyah, and Muhammad Dib Zaytun.

19 May: A planned three-day general strike begins, with calls for the suspension of schools, transportation systems, businesses, and government offices. The move is intended to humiliate and pressure government officials by impacting the country’s crumbling economy. The strike fails to garner sufficient support in almost every sector, and activities go on as usual. Local business owners, in particular, refuse to participate for fear of being singled out by police, as shops that remained closed would be immediately spotted and owners could risk losing their livelihood.

20 May: On the “Friday of Freedom,” large demonstrations are reported in Homs, Dayr al-Zur, al-Qamishli, Hama, Baniyas, and Latakia, among several other cities. Protests appear to be gaining new momentum as the movement encompasses the entire country. Demonstrators chant pro-democracy slogans. A fresh round of violence occurs in Homs, where security forces fire on a funeral procession, killing five people. At the end of the day, activists report the death toll to be at least 32 civilians.

23 May: The EU announces sanctions on President Asad.

27 May: In an “Honor to the Guardians,” demonstrations are held in Baniyas, Dayr al-Zur, Zabadani (near Damascus), Dar’a, Homs, and Hama in honor of Syrian military forces. In an effort to break the stalemate between dissenters and government officials, protesters march through the streets calling on security guards and soldiers to join the uprisings and refuse to carry out orders to use violence against peaceful civilians, hoping the army would imitate its counterparts in Tunisia and Egypt, where soldiers avoided being drawn into confrontations with protesters. On social media sites, opposition

groups argue that despotic elements of the Asad regime were targeting both civilians and troops. The message, however, was not effective. As protesters chant “the people and army are one hand,” security forces open fire into large crowds, killing numerous individuals.

31 May–3 June: An opposition conference is held in Antalya, Turkey, indicating that the Turkish government is shifting in the direction of supporting the Asad regime’s opponents.

3 June: On the “Friday of Children,” protests are held in Dar’a, Hama, Damascus, and several other major cities in honor of the children killed or wounded during the uprising. Several days prior to the “Friday of Children” demonstrations, government officials shut down the country’s Internet networks in an attempt to prevent communication among opposition leaders who were believed to be organizing rallies online. The measure was ineffective. On 3 June, large antigovernment demonstrations are held, fueled by escalating anger after the torture and killing of thirteen-year-old Hamza Ali al-Khatib in Dar’a, who is just one example of regime brutality against youths.

3–6 June: The government announces that around 120 security forces were killed in Jisr al-Shughur in an ambush by armed rebels. Opposition sources claim that some of the dead are soldiers who were killed when they tried to defect.

10 June: On the “Friday of Tribes,” major protests are held in Aleppo, Latakia, and Damascus in honor of the besieged city of Jisr al-Shughur. In recent weeks, military operations along the country’s northern regions had driven several thousand Syrians to flee their homes and head for the Turkish border. Security forces continue to fire live ammunition into crowds of unarmed protesters throughout the day and turn on ambulances transporting wounded civilians to the hospital. Pro-Asad gangs join the violence by allegedly beating passersby standing in front of popular mosques in downtown Damascus. At the end of the day, activists report that at least 48 civilians have been killed, while the state television station claims that armed gangs attacked police stations and set courthouses on fire.

13 June: A crowd of just fewer than 2,000 pro-government demonstrators rally outside the Turkish embassy in Damascus in response to statements by Turkish officials that they allowed entry to Syrian refugees fleeing military crackdowns in northern Syria. The crowd chants anti-Turkish slogans while marching toward the embassy. Members of the crowd smash billboards near the compound and erect a massive Syrian flag at the entrance of the building. When demonstrators attempt to remove the embassy’s Turkish flag, security

guards intervene and disperse the crowd. Syrian deputy foreign minister Faysal al-Miqdad personally telephones the Turkish ambassador to apologize for the attack and guarantees that nothing like it will happen again.

17 June: On “Salih al-Ali Friday,” days before President Asad is scheduled to address the nation for the second time since the uprisings began in March, major protests are held in Aleppo, Damascus, Dar’a, Dayr al-Zur, Homs, and Hama. Demonstrations are held in honor of Salih al-Ali, a famous Syrian Alawi leader who organized rebellions against the French Mandate of Syria in the 1920s. The worst violence is reported in Homs, where at least 18 civilians are killed when security forces fire on peaceful crowds. In the eastern city of Dayr al-Zur, protesters clash with police attempting to quell demonstrations and detain army defectors who gather in the province to assist antigovernment dissenters.

24 June: On the “Friday of Lost Legitimacy,” protesters fill the streets in Aleppo, Damascus, Homs, Dar’a, Latakia, and Hama in response to President Asad’s speech. Rejecting the leader’s promises of dialogue and reform, demonstrators march carrying banners that read, “It’s a dishonorable dialogue” and “We can’t have dialogue with papers and pens written by the tanks of the regime.” The worst violence occurs in the suburbs of Damascus, where clashes between civilians and security forces leave numerous people dead. In Homs, Shabiha militiamen assist in dispersing crowds of protesters by viciously beating civilians.

27 June: Moderate opposition groups and activists hold a meeting at the Semiramis Hotel in Damascus with government permission.

30 June: Veteran opposition activists in Syria establish the National Coordination Bureau, which expresses opposition to foreign intervention and sectarianism, as well as violent opposition to the government.

1 July: On the “Friday of Departure,” major demonstrations are staged in Homs, Aleppo, and Damascus, among several other cities. In Hama, tens of thousands march through the streets shouting antiregime slogans and demanding the resignation of President Asad. Massive unrest ensues in the Idlib province as well when civilians clash with security forces in their unwavering rejection of government reforms. Activists report that at least 24 protesters have been killed.

3 July: The government dispatches tanks and troops to put down the protests in Hama, with raids on homes and checkpoints to control movement in the city.

7–8 July: Ambassadors Robert Ford of the United States and Eric Chevallier of France visit Hama on a fact-finding mission, infuriating the Syrian government, which charges them with meddling in its internal affairs.

8 July: On the “Friday of No Dialogue,” in the presence of French ambassador Eric Chevallier and American ambassador Robert Ford, a special demonstration is held in Hama. Several thousand civilians gather in al-Asi Square for the city’s largest antigovernment demonstration to date. As the diplomats enter the city, residents line both sides of their car while chanting antiregime slogans and pleas for help from Washington. Security forces have been relocated outside the city’s gates, resulting in a relatively peaceful demonstration. Protests are also reported in Damascus, Homs, Idlib, Dayr al-Zur, Latakia, and Dar’a, where familiar acts of regime violence and repression result in the deaths of at least 13 civilians.

11 July: Pro-government demonstrators coordinate simultaneous attacks on the two embassies in Damascus, scaling the walls to vandalize buildings at the two compounds. Angry mobs throw sticks and rocks at both embassies while security guards allegedly take no action. The French Foreign Ministry reports that three embassy officials have been injured during the attacks. Members of the French consulate reportedly fire warning shots into the air to compensate for the failure of the Syrian guards to disperse the crowd. The violent attacks are in response to visits to Hama by ambassadors Robert Ford and Eric Chevallier several days earlier to observe the uprisings firsthand. Regime officials condemn the unannounced visits and claim that they are proof of Western interference in Syrian domestic affairs. Travel restrictions prevent them from traveling outside the capital without permission from the Syrian government. The Barack Obama administration describes Ford’s visit as a sign of solidarity with protesters. The timing of the ambassadors’ excursions demonstrates a commitment to end human rights violations against Syrian protesters. In August, Ford further irritates Syrian officials by traveling outside Damascus to Jasim (near Dar’a) to witness demonstrations and encounters with police. The move is in direct violation of travel restrictions placed on the diplomat by Syrian officials, and Damascus files a formal complaint with Washington about the matter. In Washington, the attack on the American embassy sparks a debate about whether President Obama should have recalled Ambassador Ford and severed diplomatic ties with Syria.

15 July: On the “Friday of Freedom for Prisoners,” protesters take to the streets after Friday prayers in Damascus, Aleppo, Homs, Dar’a, Latakia, Idlib, and al-Raqqah in honor of the political prisoners incarcerated since March. The demonstrations are held just days after the visits to Hama by the French and American ambassadors, who were ordered to return to Damascus

by President Asad. Security forces respond to the protests with equal, if not more, force than previous Friday demonstrations. The diplomats' visits appear to have sparked new momentum in the uprisings. Reports indicate that about 20,000 protesters marched through the capital city and around 70,000 in Hama.

22 July: On the "Friday of Khalid ibn al-Walid," demonstrators turn out in Dayr al-Zur, Hama, Homs, Dar'a, Damascus, and northeastern Kurdish cities. Protests are held in honor of Khalid ibn al-Walid, a disciple of the Prophet Muhammad who helped unify the Arabian Peninsula in the 7th century and whose tomb lies in the major congregational mosque in Homs. Civilians march in solidarity with the besieged city of Homs, where residents are under fire from military tanks that have shelled and leveled entire buildings. Inhabitants are prohibited from leaving their homes, although reports indicate that minor demonstrations have been held in downtown areas.

29 July: On the "Friday of Your Silence Is Killing Us," tens of thousands of Syrians gather in Hama, Damascus, Latakia, Aleppo, Dayr al-Zur, Homs, and Zabadani in an attempt to solicit action from regional and international actors against the Syrian regime. Demonstrators call on the "silent majority" of community leaders, religious figures, intellectuals, business elite, and international heads of state to do something to curtail the brutality of the government's crackdown. Activists condemn the silence of Arab governments regarding the situation in Syria and call on regional leaders to act to stop the military campaign against civilians. Defectors from the army in Turkey announce the establishment of the Free Syrian Army.

3 August: The UN Security Council issues a presidential statement condemning the government's use of force against protesters.

4 August: President Asad announces the enactment of a new law governing political parties designed to persuade Syrians that he is serious about proceeding with wide-ranging reforms.

8 August: Government forces launch an assault to regain control over Dayr al-Zur. Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Kuwait withdraw their ambassadors from Syria.

18 August: The leaders of the United States, Great Britain, France, and Germany call for President Asad to step down.

2 September: The EU issues a ban on Syrian oil imports.

15 September: Opposition activists in Istanbul announce the formation of the SNC.

23–27 September: The first major battle between rebel militiamen and government forces takes place in Rastan, near Homs.

4 October: Russia and China veto a UN Security Council resolution that implies that sanctions will be imposed on the Syrian government if it does not stop using military force against protesters.

29 October: The Arab League condemns the Syrian government's resort to violence to quell protests.

3 November: The Syrian government announces its agreement to a peace plan devised by the Arab League, which involves conducting a dialogue with the opposition, observing a cease-fire, withdrawing armored military vehicles from towns, freeing political prisoners, and lifting a ban on foreign journalists.

12 November: The Arab League declares that Syria is not implementing its peace plan and that it is suspending Syria's membership. Pro-government demonstrators respond by attacking embassies of Saudi Arabia and Qatar, along with those of Turkey and France.

16 November: Fighters in the Free Syrian Army carry out the first strikes in the Damascus area, hitting checkpoints and an Air Force Intelligence installation.

27 November: The Arab League and Turkey announce sanctions on senior Syrian officials.

12 December: The government holds local elections.

19 December: The government declares that it will allow the Arab League to send monitors to oversee the implementation of its peace plan.

19–20 December: Government forces kill approximately 200 in clashes in the Idlib region. The dead include villagers and soldiers seeking to defect to the opposition.

22 December: Members of the Arab League team of monitors arrive in Damascus.

23 December: Car bombs in downtown Damascus targeting an intelligence building kill 44 people.

27 December: Arab League monitors in Homs observe fighting between government and opposition forces.

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6 January: A car bombing in Damascus kills 25 people.

28 January: The Arab League suspends its mission as several countries withdraw their monitors due to concerns for their safety.

3 February: The battle for Homs begins with government forces shelling rebel-controlled neighborhoods.

4 February: Russia and China veto a UN Security Council resolution that calls for a transition to a democratically elected government and condemns the Syrian government for using violence against protesters.

10 February: Two suicide bombers in Aleppo kill 28 people.

23 February: The UN and Arab League appoint former UN secretary-general Kofi Annan to lead a peace mission to Syria.

24 February: Nations backing the opposition hold a “Friends of Syria” meeting in Tunisia.

26 February: The Syrian government holds a referendum on a new constitution, the centerpiece of President Asad’s program for political reform.

27 February: The Syrian government announces that the referendum resulted in 90 percent approval of the new constitution.

12 March: A massacre takes place in the Karm al-Zaytun neighborhood in Homs, where more than 40 dead men, women, and children are discovered, many stabbed to death or with their throats cut. Opposition sources attribute the uprising’s first major atrocity against civilians to the irregular regime militia known as Shabiha. Hundreds of residents flee their homes the next day.

16 March: UN Arab League envoy Kofi Annan presents a peace plan to the Security Council calling on the Syrian government to accept a cease-fire to be monitored by observers from the UN.

17 March: Explosions at intelligence buildings in Damascus kill 27 people.

27 March: Kofi Annan announces that the Syrian government has accepted his peace plan.

2 April: Kofi Annan announces that President Asad has agreed to withdraw heavy weapons from Syrian cities and observe a cease-fire by 12 April.

3 April: A massacre takes place at Taftanaz, a town on the road between Aleppo and Idlib. Nearly 60 civilians are killed in a government offensive that uses helicopters and artillery to capture the town from opposition forces.

12 April: A UN-supervised cease-fire is supposed to take place.

14 April: The UN adopts Resolution 2042 to authorize monitors to observe a cease-fire under the Annan Plan. In spite of the declaration of a cease-fire, fighting continues.

15 April: UN observers arrive in Syria to monitor the cease-fire.

19 April: UN secretary-general Ban-ki Moon declares that government and rebel forces are violating the cease-fire.

7 May: Elections to the parliament are held under the new constitution.

10 May: A Military Intelligence facility in Damascus is struck by suicide bombers, killing 55 people.

25 May: A massacre is carried out at Hula, near Homs, killing 108 civilians, including 49 children and 34 women, who were shot in their homes. A UN inquiry concludes that the atrocity was probably carried out by government forces and Shabiha militiamen.

28 May: Syrian diplomats are expelled from the United States, Great Britain, France, and Germany in response to the Hula massacre.

6 June: Nearly 80 civilians are massacred in Qubayr, a small town near Hama. The opposition blames Shabiha militiamen, while the government announces that terrorists have killed nine villagers. President Asad appoints a new prime minister, Riyad Hijab.

16 June: The UN observer mission suspends activities and withdraws its 300 members, as neither the government nor rebels have implemented elements of Kofi Annan's March peace plan.

22 June: Syria shoots down a Turkish reconnaissance jet that entered Syrian airspace.

30 June: Kofi Annan's peace plan receives a diplomatic boost from a communique issued by the Action Group for Syria. This includes the secretary-generals of the UN and the Arab League; the foreign ministers of China, France, Russia, Great Britain, the United States, Turkey, Iraq, Kuwait, and Qatar; and the EU representative for foreign and security policy. The Action Group concludes its meeting in Geneva with a communique recommending steps to end the strife in Syria and facilitate a political transition led by Syrians.

12 July: Government shelling and a ground attack on a village near Hama to uproot rebels kills an unknown number of residents, with estimates from 40 to 220.

14 July: The International Committee of the Red Cross declares the conflict in Syria a civil war.

18 July: The bombing of National Security Headquarters in Damascus kills four leading figures in the intelligence and military services.

2 August: Kofi Annan resigns his position as UN–Arab League peace envoy. He is replaced by veteran Algerian diplomat Lakhdar Brahimi.

6 August: Prime Minister Riyad Hijab resigns and defects to Jordan.

16 August: The UN monitor mission officially ends.

22–24 August: Government shelling and a ground attack on Darayya, a Damascus suburb, kills an estimated 300 to 600 residents.

13 September: UN envoy Lakhdar Brahimi goes to Damascus for his initial discussions with Syrian government officials.

3 October: Three bombs in Aleppo kill 33 people.

11 November: Prodded by Western and Arab backers of the opposition to the Asad regime, the National Coalition of Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces is established following a conference held in Qatar.

23 December: Approximately 90 residents of Halfaya, a village near Hama, are killed in an airstrike while waiting in line for bread at a bakery.

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15 January: About 100 residents of Haswiya, a village near Homs, are killed. The opposition accuses Shabiha militiamen of carrying out a massacre, while the government claims that the Nusra Front, a group linked to al-Qa`ida, is responsible for the atrocity.

30 January: Israel launches an air attack on a military convoy believed to be carrying advanced anti-aircraft missiles for delivery to Hizballah.

March–April: Reports surface that government forces have used chemical weapons in five locations, three in the north, including Aleppo, and two in the south, near Damascus.

3–4 May: Dozens of civilians are killed in Baniyas and Bayda by government shelling and Shabiha militiamen.

3–5 May: The Israeli Air Force attacks targets around Damascus, striking at facilities believed to store missiles from Iran intended for Hizballah. In an indirect response to the attacks, the Russian government announces that it will deliver advanced S-300 missiles to Syria, capable of striking warplanes and intercepting cruise missiles.

7 May: Russian foreign minister Sergei Lavrov and U.S. secretary of state John Kerry announce an initiative to convene a peace conference in Geneva to implement the 30 June 2012 communique issued by the Action Group for Syria.

15 May: Russia delivers antiship cruise missiles to Syria.

19–22 May: Hizballah fighters join a Syrian Army land and air assault on Qusayr, a town held by rebels that commands the road between Homs and Lebanon's Bekaa Valley, a stronghold for Hizballah. Several dozen of its fighters are killed in clashes with Syrian rebels.

21 May: Israeli and Syrian forces exchange fire across the cease-fire line in the Golan Heights.

4 June: Qusayr falls to Syrian government forces backed by Hizballah fighters.

GOVERNMENT RESPONSES TO PROTESTS

The Asad regime was caught off guard by the sudden emergence and rapid spread of a national protest movement, in part because the president and his circle assumed that their claim to represent regional resistance to U.S. and Israeli domination inoculated Syria against the sorts of uprisings that had toppled the longtime rulers of Tunisia and Egypt. The government's responses to demonstrations hewed to the regime's usual repertoire of repressive measures, promises to introduce gradual reforms, and its own street demonstrations designed to prove that Asad had popular backing. President Asad gave several speeches during the uprising that combined pledges to suppress demonstrations, which he deemed the outcome of foreign conspiracies, with promises to reform the political system. It appeared that with the former, he was attempting to shore up the confidence of his base that he was determined to resist calls for him to step down and leave the regime's constituents vulnerable, at the same his vows to institute change were intended to prove he was flexible.

REPRESSION AND REFORM

In April 2011, President Asad stepped up efforts to end unrest by ordering the deployment of troops to areas believed to pose a threat to stability. Soldiers were equipped to suppress demonstrations with speed and force. As a result, the death toll climbed sharply, and protesters were subjected to arbitrary arrests, detentions, torture, rape, harsh interrogations, and other human rights violations. Military operations were intended to strengthen the government's negotiating position during discussions with opposition leaders, but the announcement of political and economic concessions at the same time military operations were mauling demonstrators sent mixed messages. On 18 August, during a telephone conversation with UN secretary-general Ban Ki-moon, Asad announced that military action against protesters had ended. Shortly thereafter, several demonstrators were killed in Homs, Latakia, Hama, and Dayr al-Zur.

SHOOT-TO-KILL POLICY

Security forces used lethal methods to suppress demonstrations throughout the country. While not all protesters were peaceful and unarmed, the majority of demonstrations consisted of civilians chanting antigovernment slogans. Tear gas, live ammunition, beatings, harassment, shelling, military tanks, and gunships were used against demonstrators. In the face of mounting international condemnation, President Asad blamed reports of state-sponsored violence on "poorly trained members of the security services"; however, Amnesty International described these brutal practices as part of a shoot-to-kill policy, whereby protesters were shot in such lethal areas as the head or back as they attempted to flee.

DENIAL OF MEDICAL CARE

Security forces prevented injured protesters from receiving medical care in several cities, including Dar'a, and in two Damascus suburbs, Harasta and Duma. Reports indicated that medical personnel were forbidden by police from touching wounded demonstrators who arrived in the hospital, some presenting with life-threatening injuries. In certain areas, security forces stationed themselves outside hospitals and obstructed civilians from entering the building. According to several human rights organizations, such activities were illegal.

MASS ARRESTS

Beginning in early May 2011, security forces arbitrarily detained hundreds of civilians through mass-arrest sweeps. These house-to-house roundups were part of a broader campaign of government-sanctioned intimidation aimed at deterring residents from protesting against the regime. Several civilians spoke out against these random arrests, the majority of which occurred in centers of unrest. In certain areas, police detained more than 500 people in a single day. The targeted cities of these campaigns included, but were not limited to, Hama, Homs, Dar'a, and Damascus. Syrian police concentrated on detaining protesters, medical professionals, and individuals with connections to media outlets or human rights organizations. Most detainees were subjected to harsh conditions and ill treatment by state authorities.

DETENTION AND TORTURE

Hundreds of civilians were imprisoned and tortured in the early months of the Syrian Uprising, with at least 88 people believed to have died while in detention by the end of August. Former detainees confirmed that prisoners were subjected to beatings, body mutilations, burnings, electrical shocks, ill treatment, and harsh living conditions. Captives were often held incommunicado at unknown locations for weeks at a time. Several human rights organizations released reports documenting allegations against state authorities who participated in the torture and killing of detainees in Syria. Security forces targeted a wide range of age groups, from 13 to 72 years of age. The majority of detainees were taken from demonstrations to intimidate urban residents. Detention centers were run by Military Intelligence, Air Force Intelligence, the State Security Department, and the Criminal Security Department.

AMNESTY

President Asad issued amnesties for political prisoners that his regime had detained on charges of engaging in antigovernment activities. One week after the first large demonstrations, on 26 March, he authorized the release of almost 200 prisoners, many of whom were arrested during recent protests. On 31 May, he extended a general amnesty to all political prisoners, including members of the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood, releasing hundreds of detainees. Despite having met a key opposition demand, activists dismissed the

move as a publicity stunt and called on the government to end its brutal military crackdown against civilians. On 21 June, Asad issued another decree granting amnesty for prisoners whose crimes were committed before 20 June, excluding arms dealers and drug traffickers. His opponents again felt that the concession fell short of necessary civil reforms. Hundreds of detainees throughout the country continued to be held incommunicado under harsh conditions for engaging in antigovernment demonstrations that threatened Asad's leadership.

CABINET SHUFFLE

Reshuffling the cabinet is a common tactic in authoritarian regimes to demonstrate that leaders are alert to popular dissatisfaction with government performance. Five years before the outbreak of the uprising, President Asad gave the Council of Ministers a new look by replacing 15 ministers holding portfolios mainly related to the economy, but also foreign affairs, intelligence, and internal security. In the next few years, Asad tinkered with the council's composition seven times before making a clean sweep in March 2011, when confronted with widespread protests.

EMERGENCY LAW

The Emergency Law was enacted in 1963, when the first Ba'ath Party regime seized power and declared a state of emergency. The intentionally ambiguous set of rules gave government authorities the power to arrest individuals suspected of threatening public security or disturbing national confidence. Political dissidents and human rights activists were arrested, tried, and sentenced to lengthy jail terms in harsh conditions. Government officials contended that Syria's permanent state of war with Israel justified the laws, whose cancellation was a major demand in the 2011 protests. On 21 April, President Asad ratified a cabinet decision to end the draconian state of emergency as a concession to protesters throughout the country, but the decision was not accompanied by concrete measures to halt unlawful detentions and human rights abuses. Most critics and activists dismissed the gesture toward conciliation in the absence of concrete steps that would turn words into actions as further evidence of the regime's implacable refusal to change.

MEDIA LAW

The government issued a new media law that offered more freedom for Internet users and media outlets. The new edict, sponsored by the minister of information, Adnan Mahmud, reduced restrictions on acceptable publishing content in Syria and eliminated prison sentences for journalists who defied censorship regulations. Few dissidents expected the law to change the overall climate of censorship.

POLITICAL PARTIES LAW

On 25 July, the Syrian cabinet approved a draft law that allowed for multiple parties to participate in elections. The bill was part of a larger initiative to reform the country's political system and the distribution of administrative power. Government officials outlined basic goals and procedures required for the formation of a political party. The law would prohibit parties founded on the basis of religion or regional associations. A draft version was published online for citizens to review and contribute feedback.

NATIONAL DIALOGUE

In May, the political and media advisor, Bouthayna Sha'ban, announced that government officials wished to engage in a national dialogue aimed at addressing the opposition's political grievances and restoring stability. On 10 July, nearly 200 activists met in the Semiramis Hotel in central Damascus to participate in the unconventional forum. Participants addressed such issues as the removal from Syria's constitution of Article 8, which assigns to the Ba'th Party the leading role in government; an immediate end to the military crackdown against protesters; the release of all political prisoners; and investigations into the murders of civilians and soldiers during the 2011 uprisings. Several prominent activists, including members of the Local Coordination Committee, boycotted the event to protest the limited scope of the conference's agenda, which they believed exemplified the government's deficiencies and its unwillingness to change.

PRESIDENTIAL SPEECHES

30 March 2011

President Asad addressed the nation for the first time since protests erupted earlier that month. While Syrians expected the leader to announce a sweeping program of reforms, thus buying time and legitimacy, Asad shocked the nation by accusing “saboteurs” of promoting an Israeli agenda and fragmenting civil society. The president described recent domestic instability as the product of a “foreign plot” and vowed to defeat any “conspirators” that threatened national security. Analysts viewed the address as a wasted opportunity and a choreographed effort to display the president’s grip on power instead of offering concrete plans for political reforms. Asad’s speech enraged protesters for refusing to accord legitimacy to demands for government reform.

16 April 2011

President Asad spoke to the nation for the second time during the swearing in of his new cabinet. In a conciliatory gesture, the Syrian leader announced his intention to end the nation’s 48 years of emergency rule. Along with promises of additional reforms, the president touched on unemployment, economic development, and national security. While Asad’s speech tacitly acknowledged the grievances of disgruntled protesters, it was a far cry from recognizing most demands. The president described the Syrian people as “civilized and orderly” and went so far as to imply that demonstrations would not be tolerated. This second address echoed Asad’s view of the present crisis and past government failures; however, his concessions were not enough to appease demonstrators, who took to the streets within days demanding concrete reforms and tangible change.

20 June 2011

President Asad spoke at the University of Damascus in his third address to the nation. The leader offered several new concessions, including election reform and willingness to participate in a national dialogue; however, he continued to describe mass demonstrations as acts of vandalism by saboteurs and terrorists. Asad categorized protesters into three groups: those with legitimate demands, criminals participating in extreme acts of violence, and religious extremists who presented the greatest danger to the Syrian public. The president’s framing of the uprisings and his plans to restore stability fell short of opposition demands. Analysts considered the speech an update rather than

an actual attempt to satisfy protesters and activists, who described his words as empty promises, while supporters of the regime hailed the address as an important step for the administration's reform program.

21 August 2011

President Asad gave a defiant interview in his fourth address to the nation. Amid mounting international pressure to resign, the leader vowed that the regime would "not fall until Syria is finished" in a statement widely interpreted as a warning against outside intervention. He reaffirmed the regime's commitment to political reform, including new elections and a review of the constitution. He called for continual dialogue and described domestic unrest as a transitional stage to upcoming democratic changes. In a conciliatory gesture, the president alluded to security forces by stating that anyone involved in an offense against Syrian citizens would be held accountable if proven guilty. Asad defined security concerns as a separate issue from government reform and cautioned against military action that could threaten the sovereignty of Syria.

10 January 2012

In a speech at Damascus University, President Asad condemned the Arab League for suspending Syria's membership and working alongside Western powers to undermine his government. He continued to insist that Syria's conflict was stoked by a foreign conspiracy that used terrorists bent on destroying the country. On the reform side, he pledged to hold a referendum on a revised constitution in March.

3 June 2012

In a speech to the newly elected parliament, President Asad reiterated the line that he was open to dialogue, promised amnesty to insurgents, and vowed that he would continue to root out terrorists who were tools of a foreign conspiracy against Syria.

6 January 2013

At the Damascus Opera House, President Asad called for an end to foreign support for insurgents and repeated the claim that his government was fighting criminal gangs supported by foreign enemies. He called for a national dialogue to draw up a new charter, then a referendum to vote on it, and, if approved, parliamentary elections.

PROGOVERNMENT DEMONSTRATIONS

29 March 2011

Thousands gathered in Damascus, Aleppo, al-Hasaka, Homs, and Hama to show support for President Asad in a series of progovernment demonstrations aimed at countering the antigovernment demonstrations that had been spreading the previous 10 days. Protesters chanted such slogans as “God, Syria, and Bashar only” as they marched through city streets. Demonstrators held aloft pictures of the Syrian leader and carried national flags to claim that theirs was a patriotic cause. Opposition members questioned the genesis of the demonstrations, claiming that the rallies were orchestrated by state officials and that participants were required to attend. Reports indicated that school children were given the day off and business hours extended to allow citizens enough time to voice approval for Asad’s proposed government reforms.

15 June 2011

Tens of thousands of citizens gathered in a Damascus suburb to unfurl a giant Syrian flag in support of the government. The state-sponsored demonstration was an attempt to align Syrians throughout the country in support of cabinet reforms implemented under President Asad. The rally stretched along the Mazza highway while security forces monitored surrounding areas. Pro-government songs were played as participants chanted slogans in support of the Asad regime. The Syrian state television station reported that 8,000 youths were bused in from surrounding areas to attend the event.

21 June 2011

One day after President Asad called for a national dialogue and extended amnesty to several political prisoners, thousands of demonstrators showed up in downtown Damascus to voice support for the leader and his new program of political reform. While the state-sponsored event garnered skepticism from opposition members, the rally evidenced the remaining reservoirs of support Asad received from minority groups and business elite.

15 July 2011

More than 400 Lebanese women participated in an excursion to neighboring Syria to show support for President Asad in the face of international criticism and domestic protests. Under the title “Side by Side, Mary Convoy from Lebanon to Syria,” eight buses crossed the Lebanese border and went

Damascus, where the women toured religious sites and spoke out against recent uprisings. The progovernment tourists visited such sites as Umayyad Square, Suq al-Hamidiyya, Hijaz Square, and the National Museum in Damascus.

CENTERS OF PROTEST IN THE FIRST SIX MONTHS

Aleppo

Anti-government protests broke out on 13 April, when hundreds of university students began chanting prodemocratic slogans outside school walls. While security forces quickly dispersed crowds and dragged away several detainees, demonstrations in Aleppo signaled that the opposition movement was gaining momentum, with protests in the northern region. University students made up the majority of the city's dissidents. One of Aleppo's largest demonstrations occurred on 12 May 2011, and was dubbed the "Dormitory Protests," in honor of the thousands of students who attended. The city remained restless for much of June and July, largely due to a sense of solidarity with Syrians fleeing military operations in the north for safe havens in Turkey. By early August, activity in Aleppo had calmed, and the uprising's center of gravity shifted to Dar'a, Hama, and Homs.

Baniyas

The coastal city of Baniyas was an early flash point for antigovernment activity. In response to large demonstrations, military forces surrounded the city in early April, erecting checkpoints along major highways and entrance routes. In early May, the rebellious city was placed under siege by tanks entering from three directions. Special Forces were deployed to penetrate Sunni neighborhoods where protests were most prevalent. Communications were cut off and mass arrests reported. Protesters formed a human chain in an attempt to stall military activity, but dozens were killed by the end of just a single day. Security operations in the seaside city took place only days after Syrian forces laid siege to the southern province of Dar'a. Demonstrations in Baniyas extended into September; however, the city did not remain a major center of the protest movement after the May siege.

Bayda

The suburbs of Baniyas suffered the consequences of major demonstrations in the city's downtown center. Urban protesters fled to suburban areas to avoid arrest by security officers. In early May, military forces began

raiding homes in Bayda after hundreds of women marched along the main coastal highway demanding the release of political prisoners. Residents from nearby Basatin and Basiya were dragged from their homes and beaten for pledging allegiance to the opposition movement. In late August, major demonstrations were held in Bayda, with security forces arresting more than 30 people in a single day. Activity in Bayda was influenced by unrest in nearby Homs; consequently, protests extended into September.

Damascus

The capital was a lynchpin in the struggle for control of the country. As the center of power, demonstrations there were dispersed with particular vehemence. Even minor candlelight vigilances evoked the wrath of security forces and pro-Asad gangs. Major protests began in Damascus in early April, when thousands of civilians took to the streets chanting prodemocratic slogans and waving Syrian flags. Similarly, the suburbs exploded with energy, which was met with live ammunition and beatings from security officers. Protests grew larger throughout June, evoking reprisals from police. Several days after President Asad announced new concessions intended to reform the country's political system, security forces raided dormitories at the University of Damascus, killing and wounding several students for refusing to participate in pro-Asad demonstrations. Unrest continued into July, as veteran activists met in the downtown area to discuss an opposition platform against the Asad regime. Protesters continued to showcase disapproval for government officials through August and into September, but the focus soon shifted to intense battles for control over Hama and Homs.

Dayr al-Zur

The eastern province of Dayr al-Zur is one of the poorest regions in Syria. The area is known for its oil and gas production, as well as its transit routes for foreign insurgents during the 2003 U.S. occupation of Iraq. The regime kept the region under close watch during the spring of 2011 because of its economic importance and because a large number of army defectors fled to the eastern border to join forces with civilians against the Syrian government. In June, army troops were deployed to the eastern border in response to antiregime protests. Soldiers were met with heavy resistance, as most demonstrators wielded weapons of their own. In July, President Asad appointed Samir Uthman al-Shaykh as the new provincial governor in an attempt to appease dissenters and quell demonstrations. His concessions were unsuccessful, and, in August, security forces resumed operations. The main city was subsequently put under siege, as security forces killed dozens of civilians and forced hundreds of families to flee to Iraq. Military forces entered

the border town of Abu Kamal in response to what state media sources described as pleas for help against armed groups. A partial withdrawal of forces took place on 17 August; however, military operations in the restless region continued into September.

Dar`a

Since demonstrations began in March after the arrest of 15 schoolchildren, Dar`a was a focal point for antigovernment activity and military reprisal. The protests in the southern region were widely acknowledged as the trigger for opposition demonstrations throughout the country. Several of the uprising's iconic moments took place in Dar`a province.

On 5 April 2011, President Asad dismissed the provincial governor, Faysal Kalthum, who was reviled by civilians for his extensive record of corruption and his role in sanctioning the brutal treatment of protesters. The appointment of Mohammed Khalid al-Hanus in his place was intended as a concession to demonstrators in the southern province, but a few weeks later, a brutal military crackdown resorted to torture, murder, and the unlawful detention of hundreds of civilians. Soldiers and security guards used live ammunition and tear gas against unarmed citizens. Residents were killed and wounded for marching in funeral processions for relatives murdered days earlier. Mass arrest campaigns resulted in the detention of more than 500 men in a single day. Protesters turned violent, burning down the Ba`th Party headquarters and using a slew of household weapons against security forces. The town was placed under siege on 25 April, when military tanks rolled in and the government cut off communication, water, and electricity.

From the beginning of the uprising, Dar`a's al-Umari Mosque was a symbol of resistance and freedom for demonstrators throughout the country. Syrian military forces initially stormed the religious site in late March, killing and wounding several civilians. The mosque was captured on 30 April, when military officials surrounded it with tanks, helicopters, and snipers. Dozens of people were killed, and heavy gunfire could be heard throughout the day.

In May, President Asad attempted to placate the protesters by hosting a delegation from Dar`a, but the situation could not be rescued by palliative measures, in part because of atrocities committed by government forces. On 16 May, a mass grave containing the bodies of at least 13 family members was uncovered in a town near Dar`a. The Aba Zayd and al-Mahmad families were believed to have been killed during a military raid several days prior to the discovery of the grave. Reports indicated that several shallow, unmarked graves were also found along the outskirts of the city. The circumstances of the deaths, as well as the total number of people killed, were unclear. Syrian officials denied responsibility and claimed that opponents were spreading

rumors to destabilize the country. The discovery of mass graves coincided with allegations by several human rights groups that a massacre was taking place in Dar'a, with security forces reportedly employing snipers and firing antiaircraft machine guns on unarmed civilians.

The Dar'a region experienced large demonstrations throughout June and July. Unrest reached its peak in August during the Ramadan holiday. Activity in the area extended into September, as residents continued to endure reprisal from military forces.

Hama

Syria's fourth largest city has a bloody history of massacre and war. Residents of Hama suffered the brunt of Hafiz al-Asad's 1982 persecution of Islamic extremists and Muslim Brotherhood members. It became a focal point for the uprising in spring 2011. On 3 June, military forces put it under siege in response to a demonstration held in honor of 13-year-old Hamza Ali al-Khatib. Hundreds of civilians were killed as security forces fired into unarmed crowds and arrested protesters at random. On 1 July, Hama witnessed one of its largest demonstrations when a large mass of civilians, 400,000 by some estimates, gathered in the city's center to demand democratic reforms and an end to the Asad regime. The Syrian president tried to placate protesters by replacing Hama governor Ahmad Khalid Abd al-Aziz, but the opposition gained momentum during visits by U.S. ambassador to Syria Robert Ford and French ambassador Eric Chevallier. In late July, government troops were deployed to the city to contain demonstrations on the eve of Ramadan. The military crackdown was brutal, and hundreds of civilians were killed, injured, and detained. International outcries against defense operations were severe. Several heads of state and international organizations condemned the bloody assault and responded with harsher sanctions against President Asad and security officials. The city's death toll continued to rise as security forces patrolled downtown areas and residential neighborhoods. In early September, Hama became the focus of a military campaign aimed at tracking and arresting army defectors.

Homs

Syria's third largest city witnessed its first major demonstration on 18 April, when more than 10,000 people gathered in the downtown area to protest the violent dispersal of a funeral procession the day before. In early May, Syrian military forces besieged Homs in a crackdown on protesters and army defectors. Troops shelled civilians and houses, forcing hundreds to flee to Lebanon or risk being arrested and killed. On 12 May, military forces deployed to the city outskirts and began raiding nearby towns. Troops con-

verged on Rastan and Talbisa, where antigovernment protesters had toppled a statue of Hafiz al-Asad. The two towns were overwhelmed with gunfire and mass arrest campaigns. Demonstrations in the vicinity of Homs continued for most of June, July, and August. Military retaliation likewise continued as soldiers and tanks occupied the city and neighboring towns. A large-scale assault was launched in September in response to undeterred protesters and army defectors seeking refuge in the region.

Jisr al-Shughur

This northwestern town of approximately 45,000 located between Latakia and Idlib emerged as an important center for the opposition. Military forces entered Jisr al-Shughur in early June to contain rebellious protests and arrest a large number of army defectors who had gathered along the border with Turkey. Upon entering the town, troops shelled buildings, houses, and businesses to disperse antiregime demonstrations. Snipers, tanks, and helicopters were used to pursue rebels and activists, resulting in the deaths of hundreds of civilians. Security forces detained men at random and engaged in a scorched earth strategy in surrounding villages to destroy livestock and crops. The large number of refugees who fled in the wake of military activity left only 5,000 residents in Jisr al-Shughur. By late July, activity in the area calmed down, and troops pulled back to the city's outskirts.

During military operations in Jisr al-Shughur, Syrian officials claimed that groups of armed gangs had killed up to 120 soldiers and security guards. Syria's state television network described the event as a massacre and blamed heavily armed gunmen for the region's high death toll. Activists claimed that the government exaggerated the number of dead soldiers to justify the killing and displacement of hundreds of civilians. Jisr al-Shughur's remote location and history of tribal clashes gave some credence to the government's allegations in this instance.

Latakia

Demonstrations in the port city of Latakia began in early March, when protesters set the Ba'th Party offices on fire. Military forces deployed to the city in an attempt to contain the opposition and restore economic and civil stability. Dozens of protesters were killed or injured as security forces fired live ammunition and tear gas into crowds of unarmed civilians. Major demonstrations continued in Latakia for much of June and July. In August, the military bolstered its forces by dispatching tanks and naval forces to the restless port. Gunships shelled houses, buildings, and Palestinian refugee

camps in one of the worst displays of military repression since the outbreak of the uprising. Hundreds were killed, and large portions of the city's infrastructure were demolished.

Ma`arat al-Nu`man

Syrian troops expanded the regime's crackdown on the north in Ma`arat al-Nu`man, a town of about 55,000 inhabitants located southeast of Jisr al-Shughur. The city has strategic significance given its location along a major highway connecting Damascus and Aleppo. On 17 June, government forces had moved armored personnel carriers and buses into the area. Soldiers arrested dozens of protesters for participating in armed terrorist organizations. The military operation forced hundreds of residents to flee to Turkey in fear of government reprisal.

Tal Kalakh

Located only a few miles from Syria's border with Lebanon, Tal Kalakh was the scene of fierce suppression of protest. On 14 May, military forces were deployed to the border town in response to demonstrations held a few days previous in the city's central Abu Arab Square. Dozens of civilians were killed as snipers and security forces fired into crowds of demonstrators. Hundreds of residents fled to nearby Lebanon to escape the violence. Military forces left the city on 19 May, after operations were complete.

DEFENSE AND SECURITY OFFICIALS

ABBA, AMJAD AL-. Former head of Political Security in **Baniyas**, Abba was sanctioned by the **European Union** on 9 May 2011, for violently repressing demonstrations in Baniyas and the nearby town of Bayda. Baniyas bore the brunt of a government-sponsored military crackdown in early April and early May. Residents endured military raids and occupation, resulting in the deaths and unlawful detentions of hundreds of civilians. Abba was removed from his post on 20 April 2011.

BARRI, TALIB AL-. The chief of naval staff, Barri signed a naval cooperation agreement on 27 February 2011, with **Iranian** counterpart Admiral Habibollah Sayyari, that would greatly expand the influence and presence of Iranian forces in Syria. The agreement focused on joint training exercises between the two navies and included collaboration in technical fields, antipiracy practices, and equipment maintenance. During the uprising, Barri

played a major role in repressing demonstrations along Syria's coastline, particularly in **Latakia**, where President **Bashar al-Asad** dispatched gunships, tanks, and soldiers to restore order after massive demonstrations in mid-August calling for the end of the Asad regime. Naval vessels shelled houses, buildings, and people, killing several residents in a random fashion.

GHAZALI, RUSTUM AL- (1953–). Head of the Political Security Directorate since the July 2012 bombing in **Damascus** that killed several top security and military figures, Ghazali served alongside **Ghazi al-Kan'an** as head of Syrian intelligence in **Lebanon**. He was in charge of administering the country's political system and often handpicked officials to fill vacancies in the cabinet. He oversaw Lebanese foreign policy and manipulated elections to favor Syrian interests. Ghazali was a prime suspect in the assassination of former Lebanese prime minister **Rafiq al-Hariri** and was questioned for several years by **United Nations** investigation committees. In 2005, after the release of the Mehlis Report, the **United States** imposed sanctions on Ghazali as punishment for his suspected involvement in Hariri's death. He left Beirut in 2005, when President **Bashar al-Asad** withdrew all Syrian military forces and intelligence agencies from the country. At the outbreak of the uprising, Ghazali was head of the Damascus Countryside Branch of the Military Intelligence Directorate. He was part of a government delegation to **Dar'a** in March 2011 that tried to placate residents who suspected that several teenage boys had been detained and tortured for writing antiregime slogans on school walls. He was later sanctioned by the **European Union** for participating in the regime's brutal military crackdown on the town, which resulted in the deaths of hundreds of civilians.

HADDAD, RIYAD AL-. A major general in the Syrian Army, Haddad was an unwavering force behind the repression of civilian protesters during the uprisings. As director of the military's Political Department, he was responsible for coordinating the deployment of Syrian Armed Forces into several cities. Haddad organized operations in **Hama**, **Homs**, **Dar'a**, and several towns along the country's border with **Turkey** and **Iraq**. As the nation's military spokesperson, Haddad also provided statements on military operations to various media outlets. During the uprising, he was appointed ambassador to **Russia**, where he became a prominent spokesman for the regime.

HAMAD, ZUHAYR. Deputy chief of the powerful General Security Directorate and former director of its Special Intelligence Unit, which oversees print, broadcast, and electronic media, Hamad has a reputation for blackmail-

ing journalists who criticize the regime or oppose government policies. The **European Union** imposed sanctions on the general in November 2011 for using torture on detained protesters.

HASAN, JAMIL. Since 2009, Hasan has been head of Syrian Air Force Intelligence, a small department that gained prestige from its special relationship with **Hafiz al-Asad**, a former air force commander, known for its role in combating **Islamic fundamentalist** groups and conducting sensitive operations abroad. After his appointment, Hasan was accused of ordering his forces to disperse demonstrations by firing tear gas and live ammunition into crowds of civilians. In May 2011, the **European Union** issued sanctions against him for his involvement in the violent repression of protesters. The **United States** followed shortly thereafter by imposing sanctions on Syrian intelligence officials, including Hasan. In August 2012, reports from opposition sources that Hasan had been assassinated proved false.

IKHTIYAR, HISHAM AL- (1941–2012). A security advisor to President **Bashar al-Asad** and head of the **Ba`th Party's** National Security Bureau responsible for coordinating Syrian intelligence agencies, Ikhtiyar served as head of the General Security Directorate in 2011–2012. He was sanctioned by the **United States** multiple times for his affiliation with various **terrorist** organizations, as well as for his role in Syria's military occupation of **Lebanon**. In 2011, President Barack Obama issued Executive Order 13572, restricting all associates of the General Security Directorate for ordering security officials to use excessive force against peaceful protesters. During the uprising, Ikhtiyar was put in charge of suppressing activity in **Dar`a**. His command of brutal actions against civilians garnered tremendous international criticism and landed him on the **European Union's** list of sanctioned individuals. He was killed in a bomb blast that targeted the country's security chiefs on 18 July 2012, at the National Security Headquarters in **Damascus**.

KHAYRBEK, MUHAMMAD NASIF (1937–). Deputy vice president of National Security Affairs and an advisor to President **Bashar al-Asad**, Khayrbek was a close friend and former security adviser to **Hafiz al-Asad**. In 1999, he was appointed deputy director of the General Security Directorate, where he served until 2006. The following year, Khayrbek was sanctioned by the **United States** for attempting to reassert Syrian control over **Lebanon's** political system. He was also an important figure in relations with **Iran**. In May 2011, the **European Union** issued sanctions against him for his involvement in violence against the civilian population.

MAHMUD, ALI HABIB (1939–). Minister of defense from 2009 until August 2011, and a native of **Tartus**, Mahmud graduated from the military academy in 1962, and steadily rose through the ranks. He commanded military operations in the **October 1973 War**, the **Lebanese War of 1982**, and the Gulf War of 1991. In 1994, he was promoted to the rank of general and became commander of the Syrian Special Forces. In 2002 and 2004, Mahmud was named deputy chief of staff and chief of staff, respectively. In the early months of the **Syrian Uprising**, his forces were involved in dispersing demonstrators in **Dar'a**, **Homs**, and **Baniyas**. In May 2011, both the **United States** and the **European Union** imposed sanctions on him, freezing his assets and restricting his travel. On 8 August 2011, Mahmud was replaced by former army chief of staff General **Daud Rajiha**. According to some sources, he disagreed with the use of army forces against protesters in **Hama**.

MAMLUK, ALI (1946–). Director of the National Security Bureau after the July 2012 bombing on the National Security Headquarters in **Damascus**, Mamluk was deputy head of Air Force Intelligence before being named head of the General Security Directorate in 2005. As general, he was in charge of homeland security, external security, and the division of **Palestinian** affairs. Mamluk's position gave him wide latitude to oversee operations in **Lebanon**, as well as Syria. During the uprising, he allegedly threatened religious scholars supporting antiregime protesters who were congregating in front of mosques after Friday prayers. Mamluk was sanctioned by both the **United States** and the **European Union** for ordering violence against demonstrators and arbitrary detentions.

NAJIB, ATIF. Former head of the Political Security Directorate in **Dar'a** and a cousin of President **Bashar al-Asad**, Najib spent his career in military intelligence. As the head of local security in Dar'a, he was responsible for the detention of 15 schoolboys who had written antigovernment graffiti on their school walls. When a group of tribal leaders requested that Najib release the boys, he insulted them. Asad removed him from his post in Dar'a on 9 April, in an attempt to calm the situation by using him as a scapegoat. In May 2011, he was sanctioned by the **European Union** and the **United States** for his involvement in violence against demonstrators. Najib was also accused of allowing **human rights** abuses to be committed under his direction.

QUDSIYA, ABD AL-FATTAH AL- (1953–). Qudsiya was chief of Military Intelligence from 2009 to 2012, and then the deputy director of the National Security Bureau. He began his military career as head of the Republican Guard's security office and personal secretary to President **Hafiz al-Asad**. He served as head of Air Force Intelligence and led the investigation

into the assassination of former **Hizballah** military commander **Imad al-Mughniya**. In 2011–2012, the general's forces were part of the regime's violent crackdown against protesters in **Dar'a**, **Hama**, and **Homs**. In May 2011, Qudsiya was sanctioned by the **European Union** and the **United States** for ordering the use of violence against civilian demonstrators.

RAJIHA, DAUD (1947–2012). Minister of defense in 2011–2012, and a native of **Damascus**, Rajiha graduated from the military academy in 1967, as an artillery specialist, and attained the rank of lieutenant general in 1998. He served as deputy chief of staff of the Syrian Armed Forces from 2004 until his appointment as minister of defense on 8 August 2011. The general's promotion came as the uprising was evolving from a civil protest movement into an armed rebellion. Rajiha was included on the **European Union's** list of sanctioned individuals for his involvement in violence against protesters. He was killed on 18 July 2012, in the bombing of National Security Headquarters in Damascus.

SHA'AR, MUHAMMAD IBRAHIM AL- (1950–). Appointed minister of interior in April 2011, and a native of **Latakia**, Sha'ar joined the Syrian Armed Forces in 1971 and held various positions in Syria's security directorates. The major general was chief of the Military Police in **Aleppo**, director of the notorious political prison at Sednaya, and commander of the Military Police in Syria. In May 2011, he was sanctioned by the **European Union** and the **United States** for ordering the violent repression of demonstrations throughout Syria. In June, Sha'ar drew international attention by threatening retaliation after a state television channel reported that "armed gangs" had attacked and killed 120 police attempting to quell demonstrations.

SHALISH, DHU AL-HIMMA (1951–). Cousin of President **Bashar al-Asad** and head of Presidential Security. Before the uprising, the **United States** imposed sanctions on Shalish for using a company he owned, SES International, to export equipment that could be used for military purposes to **Iraq**, allowing Saddam Husayn to evade international sanctions. In June 2011, the **European Union** placed sanctions on him for perpetrating violence against demonstrators.

SHAWKAT, ASAF (1950–2012). From the coastal city of **Tartus**, Shawkat joined the Syrian Army in the late 1970s. In 1995, he eloped with the eldest daughter of President **Hafiz al-Asad**, **Bushra al-Asad**, despite objections from her family. As **Bashar al-Asad's** brother-in-law, Shawkat was promoted in rank to major general and became a central player in the president's inner circle. In 2001, he was named deputy director of Syrian Military Intelli-

gence. **United Nations** investigators considered Shawkat a suspect in the assassination of former **Lebanese** prime minister **Rafiq al-Hariri**. He was subsequently added to the Specially Designated Nationals List kept by the U.S. Treasury Department. In 2009, he became deputy chief of staff in Syrian Military Intelligence. While that position appeared to be a promotion, it may have been punishment for the security lapse that allowed the assassination of **Hizballah** military commander **Imad al-Mughniya** in an area of **Damascus** under Shawkat's jurisdiction. The deputy chief of staff position limited his direct involvement in intelligence affairs. In May 2011, the **European Union** imposed sanctions on him for his involvement in violence against the civilian population of Syria. Shawkat was killed in the 18 July 2012 bombing of National Security Headquarters in Damascus.

TURKMANI, HASAN (1935–2012). Minister of defense from 2004 to 2011, Turkmani joined the Syrian Army in 1950, and began a lifelong career in the Syrian Armed Forces. The military leader commanded divisions in the **October 1973 War** before being promoted to head of Officer Affairs and chief of the Political Security Directorate in the 1980s and 1990s. In 2002, he was named chief of staff after serving as deputy chief of staff under **Mustafa Tlas** for 20 years. During his time in office, the general adamantly denied Syrian involvement with **terrorist** organizations and claimed that the **United States** made charges with no basis in fact. In 2008, Turkmani expanded defense relations between **Damascus** and Tehran by negotiating a military cooperation agreement with **Iranian** counterpart Mostafa Mohammad Najjar aimed at forging a greater security alliance against common enemies like **Israel**. He was killed in the 18 July 2012 bombing of National Security Headquarters in Damascus.

ZAYTUN, MUHAMMAD DIB (1951–2012). Zaytun served as deputy head of the General Security Directorate until his 2009 appointment to chief of Syria's Political Security Directorate. The major general was responsible for monitoring registered political parties and publications throughout Syria. His department also assisted in surveillance over Arab–**Israeli** affairs. In May 2011, Zaytun was sanctioned by the **European Union** for his involvement in violence against protesters. Within a month, President Barack Obama imposed similar sanctions against him for ordering security forces to use excessive force in repressing Syrian demonstrations. After the July 2012 bombing of National Security Headquarters in **Damascus**, Zaytun became head of the General Security Directorate.

ACTIVISTS

ABD AL-HAMID, AMMAR (1966–). Abd al-Hamid, a Syrian activist, rose to prominence by campaigning to promote greater freedom and civic awareness. He was a fellow with the Saban Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution before founding two nonprofit organizations, DarE-mar, a publishing house dedicated to raising the standards of civic awareness in the Middle East, and the Tharwa Foundation, a grassroots organization aimed at promoting democratic change and development in the region, particularly Syria. His early involvement in antiregime campaigns forced the poet and writer to flee **Damascus** for the **United States** in 2005. Three years later, Abd al-Hamid testified before the U.S. Senate Foreign Affairs Committee, claiming that change in Syria was inevitable. During the uprising, he helped publicize the opposition's cause through publications, interviews, and transnational communications. He was featured in prominent news stories, particularly in the United States. Abd al-Hamid met with members of U.S. Congress in an attempt to stop the violence in Syria and bring about democratic change. He criticized the sanctions that the **European Union** and U.S. officials had imposed on the Asad regime as insufficient and called for tougher measures to compel the Asad regime to cease its assaults on protesters and dissidents.

ATASI, SUHAYR AL- (1971–). A prominent lawyer and **human rights** activist, Atasi belongs to a distinguished Syrian family (her cousin, **Nur al-Din al-Atasi**, was president of Syria during the **Neo-Ba`th** regime). She headed the Jamal al-Atasi National Dialogue Forum, as well as the Jamal al-Atasi Forum Facebook group. Both forums are an extension of the banned Jamal al-Atasi Forum, created during the **Damascus Spring** and named in honor of the dissident's father. Atasi became a significant voice in protests that preceded the outbreak of the uprising and was active inside the country until the end of 2011.

In February 2011, during a sit-in at Bab Tuma Square in **Damascus**, Atasi was harassed and verbally assaulted by security officials for peacefully expressing solidarity with Egyptian protesters. In mid-March, during a rally in front of the Interior Ministry, she was detained and held incommunicado for several weeks. After her release, she relayed messages and updates to foreign media sources forbidden from entering the country. Atasi called for the adoption of political reforms, the removal of **Emergency Law**, and the reinstatement of civil rights for citizens. She rejected the concessions announced by **Bashar al-Asad** in response to the protests, claiming that his leadership was illegitimate and his reform program insufficient to produce democratic change.

Atasi played a significant role in **Local Coordinating Committees** and in organizing opposition conferences to create a unified voice against the regime. She became head of the **Syrian Revolution General Commission**, the second largest activist network in Syria, established in August 2011. At the end of 2011, she relocated to **France** to escape the regime's repression. In 2012, she resigned from the Syrian Revolution General Commission to become a vice president in the **National Coalition of Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces**.

DALILA, ARIF (1942–). A prominent figure in the **human rights** movement during the early years of President **Bashar al-Asad's** rule, and a native of **Latakia**, Dalila received his Ph.D. in economics from Moscow University and became an economics professor and dean of the Faculty of Economics at the University of **Damascus**. During the **Damascus Spring**, he campaigned for the removal of oppressive **censorship** laws and greater freedoms for civilians. He was arrested in 2001 for giving a lecture calling for democratic change. Dalila was later sentenced to 10 years in prison for petitioning to remove Syria's **Emergency Law** through the Civil Society Movement. During his trial, he was charged with attempting to change the **constitution** and inciting rebellion through false information campaigns. While in prison, he was in poor health, yet he refused medical treatment and suffered a stroke in 2006. The activist was freed in August 2008 by a presidential pardon after serving seven years in prison. Upon his release, Dalila stated in an interview that his views had not changed and that he would continue to voice them despite harassment from government officials and Syrian police.

In the early months of the **Syrian Uprising**, Dalila was invited to participate in a meeting of opposition figures at the Semiramis Hotel in Damascus, in June 2011, but he decided not to attend because he believed that the regime was not serious about substantial reform. He joined the **National Coordination Commission for Democratic Change**, an organization set up by secular activists that same month on the principles of opposition to sectarianism, foreign military intervention, and armed struggle against the regime. He criticized the **Syrian National Council** for making it more difficult to resolve the struggle to achieve the end of authoritarian rule.

GHALYUN, BURHAN (1945–). Ghalyun is professor of sociology at the Sorbonne. He served as the first chairman of the **Syrian National Council (SNC)**. Born in **Homs**, Ghalyun studied philosophy and sociology at the University of **Damascus** and received doctorates from University of Paris and the Sorbonne. He published "A Manifesto for Democracy" in the 1970s,

which criticizes the rule of President **Hafiz al-Asad**. He was also in charge of the Syrian Cultural and Social Forum and founded the Arab Organization for Human Rights.

Following the election of President **Bashar al-Asad**, Ghalyun was active in the **Damascus Spring** and the **Damascus Declaration for National Democratic Change**. When the **Syrian Uprising** broke out, Ghalyun supported the opposition, and, in August 2011, he became the head of the SNC. He opposed negotiating with the regime and external military intervention. While his original three-month term was renewed several times, he resigned in May 2012, after concerns arose about his long term in power, as well as the makeup and policies of the SNC.

HITTO, GHASSAN (1963–). Hitto became the provisional prime minister of the **National Coalition of Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces** in March 2013. A **Kurd**, he was born in **Damascus** and moved to the **United States**, where he earned his bachelor's degree at Purdue in computer science and mathematics and his master of business administration at Indiana Wesleyan University. He long worked in the information technology sector while in the United States, and following the 11 September **terrorist** attacks, he helped establish the Muslim Legal Fund of America.

Hitto first got involved in the **Syrian Uprising** working with humanitarian aid groups. In mid-March 2013, he was elected prime minister of a new Syrian government in exile in association with the National Coalition, but some contended that he was placed in power by **Qatar** and did not have the necessary legitimacy with the internal Syrian opposition. Hitto has called for transparency in opposition institutions and rejected the idea of negotiating with the regime.

KHATIB, MOAZ AL- (1960–). Khatib served as president of the **National Coalition of Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces** from November 2012 to April 2013. He was born in **Damascus** and worked as a geologist for an oil company before becoming an Islamic preacher. He eventually became the imam of the **Umayyad Mosque**, but President **Hafiz al-Asad** banned his preaching. Khatib founded the Islamic Civilization Society and has taught **Shari'a** at the Shaykh Badr al-Din al-Hasani Institute and Da'wa at the Tahdhib Institute for Shari'a Sciences. He also participated in the **Damascus Declaration for National Democratic Change** in 2005.

Due to Khatib's criticism of the regime, he was imprisoned at the beginning of the **Syrian Uprising**, and, after being released, he fled the country in July 2011. He was elected president of the National Coalition of Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces in November 2012, and he is considered a moderate. In early 2013, he expressed a willingness to have a dialogue

with regime elements, and he offered to negotiate with the regime on the conditions that the regime release 160,000 detainees and issue new passports for Syrians whose documents had expired. He came under criticism within and outside of the National Coalition for this stance. Due to disagreements about the extent of aid delivered by the Western powers, Khatib resigned from his office in mid-March 2013, but he continued to serve through April and remains a prominent voice in the Syrian opposition movement.

KILO, MICHEL (1940–). A native of **Latakia** and one of Syria's most respected veteran activists during the Asad years, Kilo studied journalism in **Egypt** and Germany before pursuing a career as a writer and journalist in Syria. He was first arrested in the early 1980s for criticism of regime policies. During the **Damascus Spring**, he campaigned to free political prisoners and abolish the **Emergency Law**. He also founded a coalition of forums and committees that reactivated **civil society** groups and generated uninhibited dialogue among activists and intellectuals. In 2005–2006, Kilo was a central figure in the creation of the **Damascus Declaration for National Democratic Change**, aimed at achieving gradual democratic reform based on dialogue and individual freedoms, and the **Beirut–Damascus Declaration**, intended to normalize relations between Syria and **Lebanon**. In 2006, the government sentenced him to three years in prison on charges of undermining national unity. Upon his release in May 2009, he continued to advocate for greater civil liberties and freedom of expression.

During the **Syrian Uprising**, Kilo played a major role in organizing opposition conferences that reflect a unified opinion and direction. He initially refused to engage in government-sponsored dialogue initiatives due to the brutality of the military crackdown. Nevertheless, in May 2011, he met with several high-ranking officials, including the political and media advisor, **Buthayna Sha'ban**, to discuss possible reforms and an end to police brutality. Despairing of working with the regime, he moved to Paris at the end of the year. Kilo remained active in politics through the **Syrian Democratic Forum** (along with such other veteran activists as **Arif Dalila**), but he held back from joining the two major opposition organizations, the **Syrian National Council** and the **National Coalition of Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces**. In early 2013, an organization that he established, the Committee for the Protection of Civil Peace and Revolution, mediated a truce to end a three-month conflict between Kurdish and Arab militias in **al-Hasaka** province. At a stage in the uprising when sectarian and ethnic strife was intensifying, Kilo's organization included **Kurds**, **Arabs**, **Sunni Muslims**, **Christians**, **Alawis**, and different tribes.

LABWANI, KAMAL AL- (1957–). A doctor, artist, and prominent political activist from Zabadani, a town near **Damascus**. During the **Damascus Spring**, Labwani founded the Syrian Liberal Democratic Union, aimed at expanding individual freedoms and government reforms. He was arrested the following year after attending a meeting with opposition figure **Riyad al-Sayf** and sentenced to three years in Adra Prison on charges of plotting violence against the government. After being released from jail in 2004, he founded the Democratic Liberal Gathering to promote free-market reform and gender equality. In November 2005, Labwani was detained upon arriving at Damascus International Airport after having met with U.S. officials during a trip to Washington. Despite protests from President George W. Bush, he was charged with abetting a foreign conspiracy to attack Syria and sentenced by a criminal court to 12 years imprisonment and hard labor. In 2008, the country's military court added three more years to his sentence for undermining national unity. In May of the same year, the **European Union** presidency issued a declaration condemning the sentences against Labwani and called for his immediate release. In 2009, the **United Nations** Working Group on Arbitrary Detention investigated his case and found his sentencing to be illegal.

In the early months of the **Syrian Uprising**, Labwani's two sons were forced into hiding to avoid arbitrary detention by **security forces**. In November 2011, he was released as part of a general amnesty and fled to **Jordan**, where he became active in the **Syrian National Council** for several months. He quit the group in March 2012, denouncing it as a front for the **Muslim Brotherhood** and a tool of conservative Gulf states. Labwani also joined and then resigned from the **National Coalition of Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces**, citing the same reasons.

MALIH, HAYTHAM AL- (1931–). Malih received two law degrees before becoming a practicing lawyer and judge in 1958. His **human rights** activism dates to the early years of **Hafiz al-Asad's** rule. He was arrested in 1980 for condemning the **Emergency Law** and the government's human rights record. After serving six years in jail, Malih founded and directed the Human Rights Association in Syria. In the early years of the 21st century, he wrote several letters to President **Bashar al-Asad** requesting the removal of the Emergency Law. He also published papers and articles on human rights abuses, including a report on torture practices used during interrogations. In 2003, he was charged with engaging in illegal political activity, including forming an unauthorized organization and publishing material without a license. In October 2009, Malih was arrested for giving an interview on an antigovernment news station in which he criticized the regime's disregard for human rights and legitimate representation. In 2010, the 79-year-old Malih was sentenced to three years in prison by a Syrian military court for weaken-

ing national morale. Hundreds of activists and international rights organizations condemned the verdict, while several heads of state, including the Barack Obama administration, called on President Asad to immediately release him. After serving a year in jail, he was freed on 8 March 2011, as part of a presidential amnesty. Malih has received several international awards for his defense of human rights, including the Dutch Geuzen Medal, the French National Consultative Commission of Human Rights Honor Award, and the annual award of the Geneva Human Rights Defenders.

When antigovernment demonstrations broke out in 2011, Malih was the first opposition figure to declare the regime illegitimate and call for its overthrow. He joined the **Syrian National Council (SNC)** when it was set up but became disenchanted because he considered it ineffective. He then helped establish the **Syrian Patriotic Group**, along with **Kamal al-Labwani**, in February 2012. A few months later, in July, Malih severed ties with the SNC and set up the Committee of Trustees of the Revolution, based in Cairo, prompting charges of sowing division in opposition ranks.

QURABI, AMMAR AL- (1970–). A prominent activist and leader in **human rights** organizations in Syria and the Arab world. In 2004, Qurabi participated in founding the National Organization for Human Rights, of which he became the director in 2006. On 12 March 2006, he was arrested at **Damascus** International Airport upon returning from human rights conferences held in Washington and Paris. Security officials interrogated Qurabi at the Palestine Branch of Military Intelligence in Damascus and released him four days later. In 2011, he joined with directors of major human rights organizations to draft a letter documenting Syrian **censorship** laws and interrogation methods to block Syria's candidacy for the **United Nations** Human Rights Council.

During the **Syrian Uprising**, Qurabi was forced to flee to Cairo, where he continued to head the human rights organization he helped establish from abroad. He did not join the **Syrian National Council**. Rather, in February 2012, he joined with fellow exiled activists in Istanbul in establishing the liberal, secular National Movement for Change.

SABRA, GEORGE (1947–). Sabra served as interim president for the **National Coalition of Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces**, taking over upon the resignation of **Moaz al-Khatib** in April 2013. Sabra is **Christian** and was born near **Damascus**, in Qatana. He graduated from Damascus University with a degree in geography. He later attended Indiana University, getting a degree in educational technology systems. In the 1970s,

Sabra joined the **Syrian Communist Party** and was elected to the Central Committee. He has also represented the National Democratic Assembly and cofounded the **Damascus Declaration for National Democratic Change**.

Following the outbreak of the **Syrian Uprising**, Sabra was arrested, and after being released, he was forced to flee Syria. He joined the National Coalition to represent the Democratic People's Party and was elected a vice president of the coalition in November 2012.

MILITARY DEFECTORS

During the Syrian Uprising's first year, defectors from the Syrian Armed Forces came forward to protest against the regime and its brutal crackdown on civilians. Former soldiers provided the media with gruesome insight into army commands and protocols used to intimidate civilians and reassert control over restless cities. Soldiers were ordered to shoot unarmed residents to disperse crowds and quell demonstrations. Superior officers justified their orders by classifying protesters as terrorists and extremists intent upon bringing down the regime. Some army deserters claimed that the punishment for not shooting into unarmed crowds was a death sentence. Hundreds of soldiers fled to refugee camps in Turkey and Lebanon. A large group of defectors settled in the Dayr al-Zur region. Those who could not reach the border lived in tents in the countryside in fear of being found by state security forces. A handful of high-ranking officers stand out among the military defectors, either for their roles in leading the Free Syrian Army or for the political significance of their turn against the Asad regime.

AS'AD, RIYAD AL- (c. 1961–). As'ad was an air force colonel who defected to the opposition in early July 2011, and weeks later he announced the establishment of the **Free Syrian Army**, with himself in command. In December 2012, he was seriously injured in a car bombing.

IDRIS, SALIM (c. 1957–). An army general and dean of the military academy in **Aleppo**, Idris defected in July 2012. At a meeting of field commanders held in **Turkey** in December 2012, he was designated the operational commander of **Free Syrian Army** forces, while **Riyad al-As'ad** remained the titular commander. In 2013, the **United States**, **Saudi Arabia**, and **Qatar** decided to channel nonlethal supplies to Syrian opposition fighters through the Supreme Military Command, a body headed by General Idris, but he admitted in 2013 that there were no reliable structures for distributing assistance to the amorphous fighting cells inside the country.

SHALLAL, ABD AL-AZIZ JASIM AL- The major general in charge of the Military Police, Shallal defected in December 2012. As the top military official in charge of deterring soldiers from defecting, his decision to join the opposition held potent symbolic value. In a public statement declaring his defection, he blamed the government for losing support of the population and waging war on its citizens.

TLAS, MANAF (1964–). The son of **Mustafa Tlas**, the longtime minister of defense under **Hafiz al-Asad**, and close in age to **Bashar al-Asad**, the younger Tlas held the rank of brigadier general in the Syrian Army and was commander of a unit in the Republican Guard when he defected on 6 July 2012, finding haven in **France**. His older brother Firas, one of the Syria's wealthiest businessmen, also defected that month.

POLITICAL DEFECTORS

Members of parliament, ambassadors, diplomatic staff, and cabinet ministers abandoned the Asad regime and either fled the country or defected while on assignment to diplomatic posts abroad. Such defections gave the impression that the regime was coming unraveled, but, at least in the first two years of the uprising, they did not have discernible effects on the regime's cohesion or its determination and capacity to crush opposition by force.

HIJAB, RIYAD FARID (1966–). Hijab briefly occupied the prime minister's position after the parliamentary election of May 2012, held in the midst of the uprising. On 5 August 2012, he resigned and defected to the opposition, finding refuge in **Jordan**.

MAQDISI, JIHAD. Maqdisi was the spokesman for the Foreign Ministry from 2011 to 2012. As one of the Asad regime's primary interlocutors with Western media, he became a familiar defender of the government's point of view. When the Foreign Ministry stated in December 2012 that he was on leave, rumors circulated that he had defected to either **Great Britain** or the **United States**. Maqdisi surfaced in February 2013, to confirm that he had quit the government and deny that he had taken up residence in a Western country, but without saying where he was living. He issued a statement explaining that he left Syria due to the violence and absence of a diplomatic resolution to the conflict between the regime and opposition, whose goals he endorsed.

SALMAN, MUHAMMAD. In the early phase of the **Syrian Uprising**, 41 former government ministers and senior **Ba`th Party** officials called for an immediate end to government-sponsored violence against civilians and swift implementation of democratic reforms. Salman, a former information minister, and his group of political reformists created the Democratic National Initiative, which offered a blueprint for an interim government in the event that the Asad regime failed. The initiative called for establishing a full parliamentary democracy within a year of the president's resignation.

CONFERENCES

Lacking a central inspirational leader or preeminent political organization and unable to gather in Syria due to government repression, opposition activists held conferences outside the country in efforts to form an organization that would represent Syria's many political factions and tendencies.

ANTALYA CONFERENCE (SYRIA CONFERENCE FOR CHANGE) (31 MAY–2 JUNE 2011). The Turkish business community sponsored the meeting, which was attended by more than 200 activists, including figures from the **Muslim Brotherhood** and the **Damascus Declaration for National Democratic Change** group. The Conference for Change was disorganized, and young activists involved in the protest movement demonstrated impatience with the procedural niceties observed by older opposition figures. The assembly declared the goal of the opposition to be overthrowing the Asad regime. It elected a 31-member council to organize and assist demonstrations inside the country. Activists attended workshops on social networking and drafted a final declaration calling on all Arabs and Middle East coalitions to assist in Syria's democratic transition. Opposition members called on **Bashar al-Asad** to resign immediately and hand over power to Vice President **Faruq al-Shara`** to establish an interim government. Shortly after the meeting in Antalya, the **European Union** played host to a second conference in Brussels, but that meeting received far less media attention and was primarily frequented by veteran opposition figures, with little participation by younger activists.

DAMASCUS CONFERENCE (27 JUNE 2011). More than 200 mostly secular leftist activists and intellectuals met at the Semiramis Hotel in **Damascus** to establish an organized opposition movement. While President **Bashar al-Asad** allowed the meeting to take place, the activists did not invite representatives of the government or individuals affiliated with legal political parties. Such veteran activists as **Michel Kilo** and Lu'ay Husayn took part in

discussions aimed at shaping a cohesive and effective opposition to the regime. The meeting was bedeviled by bickering as activists articulated a wide range of ideas and demands that did not constitute a unified body of thought. At the end of the conference, opposition leaders released a statement calling for a peaceful transition to democracy and an end to one-party rule. Several prominent activists, including **Arif Dalila**, boycotted the event, claiming that the state-sanctioned conference was an attempt to give legitimacy to the regime.

DOHA CONFERENCE (8–11 NOVEMBER 2012). The Arab League and the **Friends of Syria** group met with representatives from opposition organizations to establish a new umbrella group, the **National Coalition of Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces**. At the meeting, constituent members of the coalition agreed on the goals of overthrowing the Asad regime, taking steps to form a transitional government, unifying armed resistance groups under a Supreme Military Council, and the creation of a relief fund to assist Syrians both inside and outside the country.

ISTANBUL CONFERENCE (NATIONAL SALVATION CONFERENCE) (15 JULY 2011). An assembly of approximately 350 activists and intellectuals gathered in Istanbul to focus on methods to improve communication between dissidents and foreign media outlets. Workshops were held to educate participants on subjects related to **human rights** documentation, relief and coordination efforts, and media skills. A parallel conference was planned in **Damascus** for opposition members unable to leave the country because of a travel embargo. While attempts were made to get in touch with the assembly inside Syria, violent protests in the suburbs of the capital city forced activists to cancel the gathering. During the Istanbul Conference, participants discussed the need to create a political council that would provide an alternative to President **Bashar al-Asad**. Regime officials denounced the Turkish conference, claiming that the purpose of opposition meetings outside the country was to sow violence in Syria.

ORGANIZATIONS

The forces seeking to transform Syria from a single-party authoritarian state into a representative government were handicapped by multiple divisions in their confrontation with the Asad regime: secular versus religious, socialist versus capitalist, internal versus external, political versus military. In the first two years of the uprising, efforts to fuse together all tendencies were hampered not only by starkly different visions of Syria's political future and

arguments over tactics, but also by the challenges of establishing stable channels of communication between groups operating inside and outside the country due to the government's continuous efforts to suppress dissent and protest. As a result, in mid-2013, there remained diverse political groups and rebel militias operating independently of one another, indeed sometimes competing with one another for local influence and support from international actors.

LOCAL COORDINATION COMMITTEES (LCC). Grassroots bodies surfaced in the early months of the uprising, organizing protest demonstrations throughout the country, from **Dar'a** in the south to **Idlib** in the north, and from **Baniyas** on the coast to **Dayr al-Zur** near the **Iraqi** border. By 2012, there were roughly 400 LCCs comprised of young people, frequently from middle-class and poor, working-class families. The committees played various roles as the uprising evolved from a peaceful protest movement into an armed struggle, including planning and documenting demonstrations and organizing medical relief for and distributing humanitarian aid to neighborhoods and villages affected by fighting. LCCs also issued reports to foreign media, posting videos of demonstrations to the **Internet**, highlighting atrocities perpetrated by government forces, documenting arrests, and tabulating death figures. In some regions, local LCCs combined to form Revolutionary Councils that provided connections to rebel units. Initially part of the **Syrian National Council (SNC)**, the LCCs pulled out in November 2012, to express frustration with the SNC's ineffectiveness at providing representative leadership and resources to Syrians fighting the regime.

NATIONAL COALITION OF SYRIAN REVOLUTIONARY AND OPPOSITION FORCES. Coalition established in November 2012, at a meeting convened in Doha, **Qatar**, by the Arab League and the **Friends of Syria** group to unify political forces inside and outside the country, organize the distribution of outside humanitarian and military assistance, take over administration of rebel-held zones, and plan the transition to a new government. A former prayer leader at the **Umayyad Mosque**, **Moaz al-Khatib** was elected president, while veteran dissidents from the **Damascus Declaration for National Democratic Change** and **Damascus Spring** opposition, **Riyad al-Sayf** and **Suhayr al-Atasi**, were elected to serve as vice presidents. The National Coalition issued a blueprint for post-Asad Syria that would be democratic and pluralistic.

The National Coalition incorporated the **Syrian National Council (SNC)**, individuals from **Local Coordination Committees (LCCs)**, and other grassroots groups. It gained the endorsement of the **Free Syrian Army**, which made it appear as though the goal of establishing institutional connections

between exiled political leaders and internal fighting forces could be achieved. The secular **National Coordination Commission for Democratic Change**, however, withheld support, while the **Salafi al-Nusra Front** was not invited to participate due to Western concerns about its ties with al-Qa'ida. The Gulf Cooperation Council granted the National Coalition recognition shortly after its formation, followed by **France, Great Britain, the European Union, and the United States.**

Internal strains surfaced in March 2013 regarding the decision to establish an interim government and due to Khatib's offer to negotiate with the Asad regime. Less than a year after its founding, the National Coalition seemed to be a larger version of the unwieldy and ineffective SNC, paralyzed by factional squabbles and unable to integrate military units and L C Cs inside the country. Furthermore, like the SNC, the coalition failed to integrate the largest **Kurdish** groups.

NATIONAL COORDINATION COMMISSION (BUREAU) FOR DEMOCRATIC CHANGE. The most significant opposition group that represented the mostly secular, nationalist dissident strain that surfaced in the early years of **Bashar al-Asad's** presidency, in the tradition of the 2005 **Damascus Declaration for National Democratic Change.** In June 2011, veteran opposition activists, including **Michel Kilo** and **Arif Dalila**, gathered in **Damascus** to establish an umbrella organization that would combine the resources and efforts of 15 well-established secular, leftist, and **Kurdish** political parties and groups. They drafted a charter that called for peaceful protests to achieve several immediate goals, including withdrawal of military forces from cities, ending the **Ba'th Party's** monopoly on power, lifting the state of emergency, and releasing political prisoners. The charter advocated the establishment of a transitional government to supervise the adoption of a democratic **constitution.** The commission's members rejected violent opposition to the government, sectarianism, and foreign military intervention. Instead, they favored negotiation with the Asad regime to achieve their ends.

The commission was critical of the **Syrian National Council (SNC)** due to the strong position held by the **Muslim Brotherhood** in the SNC and for its efforts to instigate foreign intervention, as well as its refusal to hold talks with the government. In terms of contacts with foreign powers, the commission reached out to governments that remained on good terms with the Asad regime, namely **Russia, Iran, and China.** Tensions with the SNC were reflected in the commission's cool relations with the council's strongest advocates, namely **Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Turkey.**

On 23 September 2012, the commission was allowed to hold a meeting in Damascus, called the Syria Salvation Conference, attended by about 20 opposition groups. The final resolution marked the first time that the commission declared that the Asad regime had to fall, a shift that reflected the reality

that the regime was willing to destroy the country before it would agree to substantial political changes, let alone a transition to a democratic political system.

SYRIAN DEMOCRATIC FORUM. Activists from the secular, leftist current met in Cairo, from 16–18 February 2012, and established the Syrian Democratic Forum, not as an opposition party, but as a mechanism for unifying the fractious opposition around a common set of principles and procedures for defeating the Asad regime and establishing a representative democratic government. The founders, who included **Michel Kilo** and **Arif Dalila**, convened a general assembly in Cairo, from 13–16 April 2012, to discuss steps to coordinate efforts of external groups and internal forces. One of the forum's distinctive positions is recognition of **Kurdish** rights in a new political compact that ensures the standing of the country's various religious and ethnic groups.

SYRIAN NATIONAL COUNCIL (SNC). In October 2011, opposition groups created the SNC to represent Syrians seeking the overthrow of the Asad regime, establish a single organization to interact with foreign governments and media, and lay the groundwork for transition to a new political system for Syria. At a time when armed resistance was on the rise (largely in response to violent government measures to suppress protests), the SNC declared the peaceful nature of its opposition to the Asad regime. Its program for transition included elections to a constituent assembly to draft a new constitution on the basis of democratic principles and protection of minorities, as well as national parliamentary elections.

The SNC proved unable to overcome a number of shortcomings. First, its roughly 300 delegates representing a spectrum of opposition groups—**Islamic fundamentalists** from the **Muslim Brotherhood**, secular liberals from the **Damascus Declaration for National Democratic Change** and the **Damascus Spring**, **Kurdish** groups, and activists from **Local Coordination Committees (LCCs)**—fell into quarrels regarding rank and leadership. Second, most of its members were exiles, and they failed to develop a presence for the SNC inside Syria. Consequently, it had no sway over the LCCs, military councils, and militant **Salafi** groups directly confronting the regime and coping with desperate conditions in cities and towns wracked by fighting. The SNC's ineffectiveness was evident in its vacillation on the question of foreign military intervention, at first opposing it, and then supporting it as a necessary measure to defend the population against government forces.

After a number of factions abandoned the SNC, the **United States** and other backers of the uprising called for the establishment of a new opposition group. Washington and other foreign governments recognized the **National**

Coalition of Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces, founded at a meeting in Doha, **Qatar**, in November 2012. The SNC joined the National Coalition and maintained its separate structures, an indication of the difficulties of forging Syria's disparate political strands into a unified body.

SYRIAN PATRIOTIC GROUP. Members of the **Syrian National Council** frustrated with its failure to take effective steps against the Asad regime created a new body in Tunis, in February 2012, shortly after a **Friends of Syria** meeting. Led by veteran activist **Haytham al-Malih**, the Syrian Patriotic Group concentrated on bolstering the armed struggle to overthrow Asad by supplying arms and equipment to the **Free Syrian Army**. In November 2012, it participated in the formation of the **National Coalition of Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces**.

SYRIAN REVOLUTION GENERAL COMMISSION. A mostly exile body that is similar in pedigree and outlook to the **National Coordination Commission for Democratic Change**. Representatives from more than 40 opposition groups met in Istanbul, **Turkey**, where they agreed to form a coalition on 18 August 2011. The Syrian Revolution General Commission kept its distance from the **Syrian National Council (SNC)**, which it viewed as an organization of exiled politicians lacking ties with the opposition inside Syria, although some members belonged to the SNC. The commission participated in the November 2012 talks in **Qatar** that led to the formation of the **National Coalition of Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces**, and one of its leading figures, **Suhayr al-Atasi**, was named one of two vice presidents in the new opposition coalition. The commission has a secular cast and, until mid-2012, called for nonviolent resistance and no foreign military intervention as the path to ridding Syria of the Asad regime. As the uprising developed into a bloody civil war, the commission changed course and expressed support for foreign military intervention and armed struggle against the regime.

THE KURDS

KURDS. For the most part, Syria's Kurds did not rush to join the wave of antigovernment protest in the spring of 2011. Kurdish youths held small demonstrations and established **Local Coordination Committees** that expressed solidarity with their Arab counterparts, but they were unable to sustain a protest movement due to opposition from Kurdish political parties that enjoyed broader internal support and access to external resources. The most powerful Kurdish party in Syria is an offshoot of **Turkey's** Kurdistan Work-

ers' Party (PKK), which the Asad regime supported during the 1980s and 1990s, when it was battling the Turkish government. When **Damascus** turned against the PKK in 1998, it relocated to **Iraqi** Kurdistan, but during its years in Syria, the PKK developed a following among Kurds that took shape in the Democratic Union Party (PYD), founded in 2003.

At the start of the **Syrian Uprising**, the PYD exploited the regime's moment of weakness to bargain for concessions. In October 2011, the government released some PYD political prisoners; in December 2011, it allowed the PYD to set up a regional Kurdish authority called the People's Council of Western Kurdistan, comprised of mayors and local government workers. Furthermore, the Asad regime did not interfere with a PYD militia that operated as an ad hoc police force in various towns and supervised border crossings. Because the PYD did not join the movement calling for Asad's overthrow, opposition activists came to view it as an enemy to the cause of the uprising. In July 2012, the regime withdrew most security forces from Kurdish towns to focus on regions closer to the center of national power, and the PYD moved in to seize control, raising its flag over government buildings.

The PYD's rival for preeminence among Syrian Kurds is the Kurdish National Council (KNC), a coalition of 16 parties that came together in October 2011, at the urging of the powerful Iraqi Kurdish politician Masud Barzani, head of Iraq's Kurdistan Regional Government and the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iraq. Most of the KNC parties were splinter factions from the Syrian Kurdish Democratic Party, which had been established in 1957. Given their history of rivalry and their reliance on support from an Iraqi Kurdish strongman, the factions in the KNC lacked a strong presence inside Syria. At the same time, the PYD was hampered by animosity from Turkey due to its organic connections to the PKK. In a bid to unify Syrian Kurdish ranks, in July 2012, Barzani negotiated the formation of the Supreme Kurdish Committee, a grand coalition of the PYD and the KNC, to jointly administer Kurdish regions abandoned by the central government.

Both the PYD and the KNC stood aloof from the largest opposition organizations dominated by Syrian Arabs, first the **Syrian National Council**, and then its successor, the **National Coalition of Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces**. Neither one put forth a platform that recognized Kurdish rights in the form of a federal political system, which is the goal of some KNC members, following the Iraqi model, let alone some form of autonomy, which is the PYD's objective. Some Kurdish youths rejected both the PYD and KNC, while asserting that they shared the same struggle as Arab Syrians in seeking the establishment of a secular democracy that ensures the rights of all citizens.

So long as the regime's forces are occupied with fighting for survival in the western parts of Syria, the Kurdish regions are likely to follow a separate political trajectory. In spite of the aspiration for unity represented by the Supreme Kurdish Committee, the PYD and KNC are locked in a struggle for power that includes street clashes, kidnappings, and assassinations. At the same time, the PYD has been fighting skirmishes against nationalist, Islamist, and tribal militias to maintain its supremacy in much of the Kurdish parts of Syria.

ARMED GROUPS

FREE SYRIAN ARMY (FSA). In the early phases of the **Syrian Uprising**, opponents to the Asad regime adopted peaceful methods espoused by counterparts elsewhere during the Arab Uprising's first months. As it became clear that the government's answer to demonstrations was to unleash security forces and the army on protesters, the opposition resorted to armed resistance. In July 2011, a Syrian air force colonel, **Riyad al-As'ad**, defected and announced the formation of the FSA, comprised of fellow army defectors based in **Turkey**. While the name implied a unified military command devoted to a common political purpose, the FSA did not evolve into an alternative national army, but remained a catchall term for the dozens of local rebel units that sprang up across the country and represented many political tendencies that shared one thing, the desire to rid Syria of the Asad regime. Colonel As'ad and his aides interacted with foreign media and governments, while rebel units operated under the FSA banner but without taking orders from its titular leadership.

Foreign backers of the opposition in the West and the Arab world did not shore up the FSA with much in the way of weapons and funds, so rebel units depended on the black market and separate deals with different foreign sponsors to fund local campaigns against government forces. The FSA was hamstrung by the ineffectiveness of such exiled political organizations as the **Syrian National Council** and the **National Coalition of Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces**, both of which aspired to assert authority and control over rebels fighting the Asad regime, but neither of which garnered the stature, credibility, or resources to do so. Consequently, two years into the Syrian Uprising, rebel militias lacked a unified command, logistics, and supplies. In addition, they did not participate in initiatives to create unified political representation.

NUSRA FRONT, AL-. Also known as the Front for the Defense of the Syrian People, the al-Nusra Front is a militant **Salafi** organization that surfaced in January 2012. It painted the uprising as a struggle between **Sunni** Muslims and heretical **Alawis**, a depiction that exacerbated sectarian tensions. Its goal was not merely to remove the Asad regime, but also to install a puritanical Islamist state in the name of returning to the ways of Islam's founding fathers, which is the basic notion of Salafis. The group took credit for suicide bombings against government targets that killed dozens of civilians in **Damascus** and **Aleppo**. Its slogans; propaganda campaigns on the **Internet**; and inclusion of foreign fighters from **Iraq**, **Yemen**, **Jordan**, **Saudi Arabia**, and elsewhere bore the stamp of al-Qa'ida's influence on militant Salafis. Indeed, al-Qa'ida's leadership and the Iraqi branch of al-Qa'ida expressed solidarity with the front.

In addition to undertaking attacks on government forces, the front operated humanitarian relief efforts in and around Aleppo, where it distributed flour to bakeries and set up religious courts where state courts had stopped working. The **United States** and other Western powers oppose the organization because of its connections to al-Qa'ida.

SUPREME MILITARY COUNCIL. A military command body established in December 2012, at a meeting in **Turkey**, and attended by several hundred rebel fighters. The purpose of the Supreme Military Council is to coordinate assistance from Western and Arab supporters to rebel militias. A prominent former general in the Syrian Army, **Salim Idris**, was selected as head of the council, which consists of 30 officers. It is a military counterpart to the **National Coalition of Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces** in the sense that its establishment reflects the desire of external powers to create a Syrian partner in the effort to overthrow the Asad regime.

MEDIA

Accurate and reliable information on the uprising is difficult to obtain because government officials have banned foreign journalists from entering the country. The few reporters who have been admitted for brief visits were not allowed access to demonstration sites. Without outside observers to verify contradictory claims by the government and opposition, it is often impossible to separate rumors from facts. The opposition has attempted to shape international opinion by distributing dramatic video clips and Facebook posts, while government news channels have skewed coverage of demonstrations and

opposition movements to reflect official positions. Syrians often rely on satellite channels for news, even if their reports are skewed by sympathy for the opposition.

BLOGS. The first Syrian blog was created in 2004, and written in English. Four years later, Arabic blogs began appearing with greater frequency as the country experienced its first online revolution. Syria's blogosphere has become a crucial part of the **social media** campaign against President **Bashar al-Asad**. Cyber activists have used blog posts to communicate political opinions and share information from media sites blocked to Syrian **Internet** users. Blogs represent one of the important ways that the Internet allows Arabs to evade and erode **censorship**.

FACEBOOK. Since Facebook began its rapid spread outside educational institutions in 2006, it has created numerous problems for Syrian government officials, who frequently shut down access to the **social media** site. In 2010, a video depicting the punishment of a schoolchild by his teacher was posted on Facebook and began circulating throughout the country. As the clip received international and regional attention, the incident highlighted the impact social media could have. Facebook has become one of the main media sites that dissidents use to organize protests, express and discuss political views, and circulate negative images of the Asad regime to an international audience.

GAY GIRL IN DAMASCUS HOAX. In the early stages of the uprising, a **blog** entitled *Gay Girl in Damascus* captured the attention of hundreds of subscribers worldwide. The passionate writings of an apparently lesbian blogger named Amina Arraf gained international notoriety. When her writings abruptly stopped, a "cousin" of Amina informed readers that the young woman had been arrested by **security forces**. News of her disappearance and arrest quickly became an online sensation. On 12 June 2011, it emerged that Amina was a hoax created by Tom MacMaster, a 40-year-old graduate student at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland. The event was significant because it illustrated how online anonymity could be used to perpetrate hoaxes.

INTERNET SHUTDOWN. The government has cut communication networks at different times to prevent the flow of information within the country and to the outside world. In June 2011, **Internet** services were shut down in much of Syria to prevent activists from organizing demonstrations by using **social media** sites. The move elicited criticism from **human rights** organiza-

tions and foreign heads of state. Former U.S. secretary of state Hillary Clinton described the measure as a restriction on Syrians' basic political rights and called on the regime to immediately halt its **censorship** tactics.

MARTYRS WEEK FACEBOOK PAGE. Major demonstrations were held every Friday under the name of an individual, city, or group that played a prominent role in shaping the revolution. *Martyrs Week* was a Facebook page where protesters voted to determine the title of upcoming demonstrations. The page was also used as a forum to organize protests, boycotts, and acts of civil disobedience throughout the country.

SOCIAL MEDIA. Western reporting on the Arab Uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt has made much of the role of such social media as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube in facilitating the mobilization and synchronization of large crowds. Their exact significance in launching and sustaining the Arab Uprisings is a matter of debate, but they have represented a new instrument for activists, one that Syrians certainly deploy, like their Arab counterparts. Open criticism of regime policies used to mean risking arrest and prison, but social media sites have provided activists with platforms to discuss political ideas and express solidarity, generally offering anonymity that allows them to elude repression. To limit the potential for social media to bolster dissent, government officials have employed measures to monitor and track opposition figures with surveillance on social media sites.

SYRIAN ELECTRONIC ARMY. In response to the growing volume of antiregime material on the **Internet**, the government created a special division of computer scientists called the Syrian Electronic Army to track dissidents and post proregime material to counter criticism of President **Bashar al-Asad**. This cyber army invented tactics to shut down **social media** sites and webpages that serve as platforms for the opposition.

SYRIAN REVOLUTION OF 2011 FACEBOOK PAGE. The closest thing to an official Facebook page for the **Syrian Uprising** has Arabic and English editions for regional and international audiences. The page is frequently updated with video clips, articles, and **blogs** on events occurring throughout the country. It provides firsthand accounts of demonstrations, brutal retaliation against protesters, and regime military activity as captured by some of its nearly 300,000 members. Activists inside Syria use the Facebook page to organize protests, while activists outside the country turn to it to relay messages of support and solidarity.

VIDEOS. Tight restrictions on foreign journalists have left international media outlets in the dark about events occurring on the streets of Syrian villages, towns, and cities. In response to restrictions on the dissemination of information, activists have shot video footage to document activity in Syria for regional and international audiences. Hundreds of amateur videos posted online depict massive demonstrations and brutal crackdowns. Groups have made it their mission to capture regime brutality on video to share with the outside world and mobilize global opposition to the Asad regime. Clandestine videographers have been labeled terrorists by government officials and consequently been forced to go underground or into hiding in remote regions of the country.

INTERNATIONAL ACTORS

The Syrian Uprising quickly acquired international dimensions due to the keen interest that foreign powers felt were at stake in its outcome. For Syrians exposed to ferocious government repression, flight to nearby countries became more common toward the end of the uprising's second year, giving rise to a large refugee population in Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey, as well as concomitant humanitarian problems. In the regional context, the Asad regime's allies, Iran and Hizballah, offered political and military backing, while the opposition obtained firm support from the Gulf states, especially Qatar and Saudi Arabia, as well as Turkey. Consequently, the internal struggle interlocked with regional power plays. Beyond the Middle East, the Syrian government enjoyed consistent backing from Russia, while China lent its veto to UN resolutions that might result in outside intervention. Meanwhile, the EU and the United States condemned the Asad regime's resort to violent measures against protests, toiled to forge an effective opposition organization, and gradually boosted training and nonlethal assistance to rebel forces fighting government forces. The lack of political consensus among foreign powers may have prolonged the fighting inside Syria, although it was not clear that the regime would have buckled in the face of heavier external pressure in any event. By mid-2013, it was clear, however, that the Syrian Uprising's international reverberations complicated the efforts of diplomats to halt the country's slide into years of death and destruction.

INTERNATIONAL CRITICISM

Regime officials were unfazed by international criticism. President Asad's experience with international isolation during the George W. Bush administration imbued him with a keen and even exaggerated sense of external threats, which perhaps explains his statements describing protesters as saboteurs and the uprising as a foreign plot rather than ordinary Syrians fed up with the brutality and incompetence of his regime. Asad, along with several chief ministers, denounced sanctions imposed by the EU and the United States and rejected demands for his resignation. The regime deflected criticisms and reprimands from the EU, UN, and United States, describing Western reproaches as hypocritical interference.

CALLS FOR REGIME CHANGE

On 18 August 2011, U.S. president Barack Obama called on Bashar al-Asad to resign from his position as president. Shortly thereafter, French president Nicolas Sarkozy, German chancellor Angela Merkel, Canadian prime minister Stephen Harper, and British prime minister David Cameron issued similar statements demanding that the Syrian leader step down. Critics questioned why U.S. and European officials took nearly five months to call for regime change in the midst of ongoing violence and human rights abuses. The leaders delayed such a drastic call given the hazardous consequences that regime change in Syria could pose to the domestic, regional, and international landscape. There was fear that border security could weaken and that internal disorganization could provide terrorist groups with access to Syria's stockpiles of chemical and biological weapons.

THE GENEVA COMMUNIQUE

The Geneva Communique emerged in late June 2012, from a meeting in Geneva, Switzerland, of the foreign ministers of a number of countries involved in and/or affected by the Syrian conflict, as well as representatives of the UN, Arab League, and EU, known collectively as the Action Group. The document states that the Action Group was working "urgently and intensively to bring about an end to the violence and human rights abuses and the launch of a Syrian-led political process leading to a transition that meets the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people and enables them independently and democratically to determine their own future." It also maps out some

basic principles regarding a period of transition from a conflict environment to a more stable, inclusive Syrian polity linked to UN special envoy (and former UN secretary-general) Kofi Annan's six-point plan that he proffered in the spring of 2012, which outlined steps to bring an end to the fighting. The communique was not implemented and remained moribund for about a year, until May 2013, when U.S. secretary of state John Kerry and Russian foreign minister Sergei Lavrov jointly called for an international peace conference based on the Geneva Communique to bring an end to the Syrian conflict through a political settlement, which became known as the Geneva Process or Geneva II. The conference had been called for the summer or fall of 2013, although many obstacles to actually convening it, much less generating a settlement, remain.

CHINA. The People's Republic of China has remained one of **Bashar al-Asad's** few remaining allies during the uprising. China does not wish to see another military intervention as occurred in Libya starting in March 2011. Instead, it has consistently supported a diplomatic solution. Beijing has maintained good relations with **Damascus** and coordinates with it on foreign policy. Together with **Russia**, China blocked **United Nations (UN)** sanctions and vetoed resolutions condemning President Asad. Chinese ambassadors to the UN have gone so far as to boycott Security Council sessions to protest deliberations on Syrian unrest.

EGYPT. After the overthrow of President Hosni Mubarak in February 2011, Egypt's military leadership showed interest in exploring areas for cooperation to improve relations with **Damascus**, which had long been strained by Syria's alliance with **Iran** and support for **Hamas**. When the Asad regime used brutal measures to suppress the popular protests that erupted in mid-March, Egypt joined the ranks of Arab countries condemning Damascus. The Arab League approved **trade** sanctions against the Asad regime, which Egypt implemented selectively on the grounds that breaking all commercial ties would primarily harm the Syrian people. In February 2012, Egypt's lower house of parliament voted to sever ties with the Syrian parliament, and that same month, Egypt withdrew its ambassador from Damascus in an effort to pressure the Asad government to cease its violence. Cairo also hosted meetings of Syrian opposition groups seeking the overthrow of the Asad regime.

EUROPEAN UNION (EU). The EU began criticizing the Asad regime in March 2011, when High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Catherine Ashton issued a statement condemning officials for ordering the violent suppression of protests. As demonstrations continued in April,

representatives from **Great Britain, France**, and Italy called for stronger measures against the regime. The EU announced its first round of sanctions on 9 May 2011. Council Implementing Decision 2011/273/CFSP restricted the sale, supply, or transfer of weapons and military equipment to Syria. The resolution also targeted 13 individuals believed to be responsible for violence against protesters, freezing their assets and imposing travel restrictions on them.

On 23 May 2011, the EU expanded sanctions under Council Implementing Decision 2011/302/CFSP, which added 10 more Syrian officials to the list of targeted individuals. Ashton described the move as a warning for **Damascus** to “stop the violence and respect **human rights**.” Several Syrian officials denounced the new sanctions, including Foreign Minister **Walid al-Mu'allim**, who deemed the developments a “black page” in European history. President **Bashar al-Asad** also rejected the European ban, branding it “foreign meddling” in internal affairs. During a speech at the University of Damascus, the Syrian leader dismissed accusations that security forces had used excessive force against demonstrators and declared that the country was prepared to “forget Europe is on the map.”

The EU slapped further sanctions on Damascus on 23 June 2011, in light of continued bloodshed. Council Implementing Decision 2011/367/CFSP added seven individuals and four entities to the sanctions list. The individuals and companies targeted were accused of aiding the Asad regime in suppressing demonstrations through financial and military assistance. In July, a slew of European governments and organizations declared their support for EU sanctions against Syria and announced their willingness to abide by council decisions.

The EU imposed a fourth round of sanctions against Syria on 1 August 2011. Council Implementing Regulation (EU) No. 755/2011 designated five additional individuals believed to have orchestrated a violent military crackdown against civilians. Ashton issued a statement condemning Syria's leaders for their unwillingness to implement reforms and end violence. In an effort to intensify constraints on Damascus, the foreign policy chief recommended that the **United Nations** Human Rights Council hold a special session on Syria.

On 24 August 2011, the EU announced the adoption of Council Implementing Regulation (EU) No. 442/2011, aimed at broadening the scope of sanctions against Syria. The new decree expanded restrictions on 15 individuals and five entities that had previously been sanctioned for engaging in state-sponsored acts of **terrorism**. The new penalties also targeted members of **Iran's** elite Quds Force believed to be assisting Syrian **security forces** in suppressing demonstrations.

FRANCE. Paris demonstrated unwavering commitment to a severe response to the Asad regime for its violent suppression of dissent. Criticism of the president's actions began in March 2011, when French foreign minister Alain Juppé called on **Damascus** to release detainees, respect **human rights**, and implement political reforms as soon as possible. Representatives backed sanctions against Syrian officials through the **European Union**, while simultaneously pushing for a **United Nations** resolution that would condemn the regime's brutal treatment of protesters. On 18 August, President Nicolas Sarkozy issued a joint statement alongside British prime minister David Cameron and German chancellor Angela Merkel demanding the resignation of **Bashar al-Asad**. They cited his lost legitimacy and disrespect for human rights as reasons for him to step down.

FRIENDS OF SYRIA. An informal coalition of Western and Middle Eastern states formed in February 2012, to support the **Syrian Uprising**. After **Russia** and **China** vetoed **United Nations** Security Council resolutions that would have condemned the Asad regime, diplomatic efforts to isolate and sanction the Syrian government shifted to an ad hoc political alliance, including most members of the Arab League, **Turkey**, the **European Union**, **Great Britain**, and the **United States**. In April 2012, the Friends of Syria recognized the **Syrian National Council** as the representative of the opposition but grew frustrated with its ineffectiveness and switched its backing to the **National Coalition of Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces** in December 2012.

A year after their first meeting, the Friends of Syria remained confounded by the challenges of meeting the mounting humanitarian crisis in Syria, unifying exile and internal opposition forces, and persuading the Asad regime to bow to pressure and negotiate a political transition. At the Friends of Syria meeting in Doha on 22 June 2013, a new grouping emerged called the London 11, composed of the United States, Great Britain, **France**, Germany, Italy, Turkey, **Egypt**, **Jordan**, **Saudi Arabia**, **Qatar**, and the United Arab Emirates. This group worked more specifically on finding ways to coordinate aid to the Syrian opposition.

GREAT BRITAIN. Great Britain responded to the **Syrian Uprising** with measures aimed at ending violence against demonstrators and inaugurating democratic reforms in the nation. During the early phases of unrest, Foreign Secretary William Hague called on government officials to respect the rights of peaceful protesters while issuing a travel advisory to British citizens in the country. London backed up demands for Syrian **security forces** to show restraint by collaborating with the **European Union** to impose sanctions on top regime officials. Britain coauthored several draft resolutions aimed at

condemning military operations against protesters. In an address to the House of Commons in June 2011, Hague accused security forces of torturing innocent protesters and called on President **Bashar al-Asad** to either “reform or step aside.” On 18 August 2011, Prime Minister David Cameron released a joint statement alongside **French** president Nicolas Sarkozy and German chancellor Angela Merkel demanding that the Syrian president step down immediately.

IRAN. The Syrian regime enjoyed firm support from Iran throughout the uprising. Tehran provided **Damascus** with riot control gear, paramilitary training, and weapons shipments to assist in the suppression of mass demonstrations. President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad proclaimed his support for the Asad regime and criticized Washington for its hypocritical stance toward Syrian violence while ignoring casualties in **Egypt**, Bahrain, and **Great Britain**. On 23 June 2011, the **United States** and **European Union** imposed sanctions on Iran’s national airline for transporting illegal weapons to Damascus; three top commanders of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard were believed to be assisting Syrian military operations against civilians. Iranian foreign minister Muhammad Shaybani condemned the unannounced visits of U.S. and French ambassadors to **Hama** in July 2011, describing them as an example of Western interference in internal Arab affairs.

In August 2011, Iran and Syria announced the construction of a military outpost at **Latakia** airport that was supposed to facilitate transport of weapons and military supplies between the two countries. Tehran also provided the Syrian government with financial backing and **petroleum** to prevent its **economy** from crumbling. Syria’s main ally also engaged in negotiations with the head of the Arab League and a former Egyptian foreign minister in an attempt to create an axis of protection that would insulate Damascus from foreign interference and diplomatic pressure. Tehran did not want to see the fall of a friendly government in Damascus, one that plays an important role in supplying its **Lebanese** ally **Hizballah**.

IRAQ. In August 2011, as leaders throughout the Middle East condemned Syria for its brutal military crackdown and slow reform process, Iraqi prime minister Nuri al-Maliki struck a friendlier tone urging protesters to desist in violent acts against the government and refrain from sabotaging reform efforts by the president. The prime minister’s statements illustrated his tilt toward Syria’s primary regional ally, **Iran**. In addition, it underscored Iraqi sensitivity to the sectarian dimension of the strife in Syria and its potential for stimulating **Sunni–Shi’i** conflict in Iraq, with Sunnis supporting the opposition and Shi’is backing the Asad regime.

ISRAEL. The Israeli government, under Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, kept close watch on the turmoil in Syria, both for immediate developments and long-term consequences. Israel warned the Asad regime against transferring advanced missiles and chemical weapons to **Hizballah**. In January and May 2013, Israel carried out strikes inside Syria that reportedly hit military depots outside **Damascus** and a convoy transporting anti-aircraft missiles to **Lebanon**. Also in the first half of 2013, Israeli and Syrian forces exchanged fire across the **Golan Heights** cease-fire line, underscoring concerns that the fighting in Syria could spread beyond its borders. As for long-term scenarios, the fall of the Asad regime would weaken the position of **Iran** and Hizballah, Israel's most implacable enemies. Such an event could also presage a long period of instability in Syria that could allow al-Qa`ida affiliates to establish a foothold uncomfortably close to Israel.

JORDAN. Given Jordan's small size and modest economic resources, its role in the regional response to the **Syrian Uprising** has reflected the government's desire to contain its fallout. The revolutionary mood of the **Arab Spring** found expression in demonstrations calling for greater political freedoms, but they did not snowball into the kind of irresistible force that swept out the rulers of Tunisia and **Egypt**. Nevertheless, King Abdallah II and his advisers were on high alert for the Syrian Uprising's potential destabilizing effects.

The fighting and worsening humanitarian crisis in Syria triggered a large exodus of **refugees** to Jordan. By June 2013, approximately 500,000 Syrian refugees had crossed the border, most of them concentrated in crowded camps that strained the capacity of the **United Nations** Refugee Agency to deliver food and medical care.

Early in the uprising, the Jordanian government sided with other Arab governments in seeking a political solution and did not allow opposition forces to use Jordanian territory as a staging ground for infiltrating rebels. As the conflict dragged on with no end in sight and the wealthy Gulf Arab states pressing on Amman to extend aid to the opposition, Jordan shifted its position. In the fall of 2012, the **United States** sent a small military liaison mission to assist Jordanian counterparts dealing with the rising tide of refugees. A few months later, Jordan was reportedly providing clandestine assistance to rebel forces, along with the United States, **France**, and **Great Britain**.

LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES (ARAB LEAGUE). In response to the regime's violent crackdown on protest, Secretary-General Nabil al-Arabi called on President **Bashar al-Asad** to suspend all military action against demonstrations. On 13 July 2011, Arabi visited **Damascus** to discuss domes-

tic reforms. Several weeks before his July visit, Arabi made known the league's official position on rejecting external interference in the domestic affairs of Arab countries. As protests in Syria extended into their fifth month, the secretary-general made another visit to Damascus in August and urged President Asad to order an end to violence against civilians. The Arab League displayed increasing concern for Syria's deteriorating security situation and the prospect of sectarian fighting spreading to **Iraq** and **Lebanon**. In September, Arabi paid another visit to Damascus to discuss ways to stop the unrest.

In November 2011, the Arab League announced that the Syrian government had agreed to implement a plan that included a cease-fire, freeing political prisoners, and talks with the opposition. Less than two weeks later, however, the league reported that the Syrian government was not carrying out steps called for in the plan and, therefore, its membership was being suspended. At the end of the month, the league imposed sanctions on high-ranking Syrian officials. The diplomatic pressure seemed to pay off in December, when the Asad regime announced that it would allow Arab League monitors to observe implementation of a cease-fire. The observer mission lasted only a month, as government forces continued their onslaught in the presence of monitors, and the Arab League members withdrew their members of the mission in protest.

The next Arab League initiative, launched in February 2012, was a joint effort with the **United Nations (UN)** to end the conflict by appointing former UN secretary-general Kofi Annan as a special envoy on behalf of both the league and the UN. Annan visited Damascus and regional capitals in search of a formula to stop Syria's descent into civil war, but his efforts failed as well, and he resigned in August, to be replaced by Lakhdar Brahimi, a veteran Algerian diplomat. Arab frustration with the Asad regime came to a head at the Arab League meeting held in Doha, **Qatar**, in March 2013, when it banned the Asad regime and recognized the recently formed **National Coalition of Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces** as the Syrian representative, even though the coalition was riven by internal bickering at the time.

LEBANON. The uprising in Syria aggravated political and sectarian tensions in Lebanon. **Shi'i Hizballah** supported the Asad regime, while Lebanese **Sunnis** backed the opposition. As Syria's protest movement transformed into a civil war with sectarian overtones, endemic strains between Lebanon's Sunni and Shi'i populations worsened. The northern port city of Tripoli, in particular, had a history of strife between Sunni and **Alawi** militants. Lebanese Sunnis volunteered to fight on the rebel side in Syria, and Syrian rebels used Lebanon as a base to smuggle weapons and supplies into Syria. Hizballah's decision in the spring of 2013 to send its fighters into

Syria to join government forces in their attempt to retake a strategic town from Syrian rebels exacerbated sectarian tensions in Lebanon. Shi'i neighborhoods in Beirut and towns in the Bekaa Valley were struck by rockets in retaliation for Hizballah's intervention in Syria. Lebanon also became a haven for Syrians fleeing the violence. By June 2013, about 500,000 Syrian **refugees** were registered with the **United Nations** Refugee Agency.

QATAR. Before the uprising, Qatar and Syria had good relations, and Prime Minister Hamad bin Qasim ibn Jabir al-Thani expressed diplomatic support for the Asad regime when demonstrations first broke out in March; however, Qatar reversed course on 18 July 2011, recalling its ambassador to Syria and closing its embassy. The small, wealthy emirate then threw its support behind opposition groups seeking the overthrow of the Asad regime. Qatar became a patron of armed factions fighting against government forces, and its diplomats strove to unify opposition groups. In November 2012, Doha hosted a conference for opposition groups to form a representative organization that could unify the ranks of internal and exile factions. The conference resulted in the establishment of the **National Coalition of Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces**.

REFUGEES. The violence in Syria has driven increasing numbers to seek refuge in neighboring countries. In the uprising's first year, the **United Nations (UN)** Refugee Agency estimated that 25,000 refugees fled to neighboring countries. That number quadrupled during the spring and early summer of 2012, to reach 100,000 by mid-July. The pace of exodus continued to accelerate not only due to ferocious fighting between government forces and rebels, but also because of deteriorating conditions inside much of the country, especially acute shortages of food, water, and medicine. By early 2013, the UN figure for Syrian refugees surpassed 500,000. Then, during the first four months of 2013, another 700,000 civilians were registered with the UN Refugee Agency, and as many as 200,000 more were awaiting registration. In May 2013, the agency counted 1.2 million refugees and estimated that another 200,000 more refugees were unregistered.

IRAQ. Residents in Syria's eastern towns and villages fled to Iraq in the wake of military reprisals against demonstrations, particularly around **Dayr al-Zur**. In mid-June 2011, Iraqi officials announced that they would begin building camps in northern Nineveh province to accommodate the influx of refugees. In May 2013, the number of registered refugees was on the verge of surpassing 150,000, the majority concentrated in three camps in the **Kurdish** region and a smaller number in Anbar province.

JORDAN. About 6,000 Syrians fled to Jordan in the first year of the uprising, primarily residents of **Dar'a** and its environs. By the end of 2012, that number grew to more than 100,000 and jumped to nearly 500,000 by May 2013. Most of the refugees were dispersed in different parts of the country, while approximately 200,000 resided in refugee camps near the Syrian border.

LEBANON. By late April 2011, almost 5,000 Syrians had fled to Lebanon in the wake of military operations in the country's southern region. In May, **Lebanese** officers began detaining Syrians for illegally entering the country, but they could do little to stem the flow. By the end of 2012, about 130,000 refugees were in Lebanon, and that figure increased to 360,000 by May 2013. The majority resided in either northern or eastern Lebanon, close to the border, but nearly 90,000 were residing in the Beirut area and another 60,000 in southern Lebanese towns.

TURKEY. In 2011, Syria's northern neighbor was the destination for the bulk of refugees due to the heavy fighting that took place in northern towns. By July, more than 10,000 Syrians had crossed the border to flee military operations in **Idlib** province. The massive influx of civilians sent Turkish officials scrambling to accommodate the humanitarian crisis as Ankara kept its borders open to Syrians seeking a safe haven. The UN figure at the end of 2012 was close to 150,000, and, in May 2013, there were 330,000 refugees on Turkish soil.

RUSSIA. Russia has been the primary supporter of Syrian interests in the international arena during the uprisings. Moscow's stance stems from its close relationship to the Asad regime dating to the early 1970s. For decades, Syria was one of Russia's major arms purchasers. The Russian Navy had facilities for supplies and maintenance at **Tartus**. Economic ties are also significant, as Russia had nearly \$20 billion invested in **tourism, energy**, and infrastructure development projects on the eve of the uprising. With Russian material assets and prestige on the line, the overthrow of the Asad regime would diminish Russian influence in the region. As a result, Russia vetoed the majority of **United Nations (UN)** resolutions that would condemn or sanction Syrian officials for violence against protesters. Furthermore, Moscow warned against a Libyan-style foreign military intervention, claiming that Syrian unrest did not constitute a threat to international stability. It favored swift implementation of political reforms and an end to military operations as ways to preserve the regime.

In June 2011, U.S. secretary of state Hillary Clinton held talks with Russian foreign minister Sergei Lavrov in an attempt to break a deadlock over a UN Security Council resolution that would condemn President **Bashar al-Asad's** resort to violence against demonstrators. A delegation of Syrian opposition members tried to sway Moscow's opinion by meeting with senior

Russian officials to discuss possible Security Council initiatives. In talks with Prime Minister Vladimir Putin and Russian envoy Mikhail Margelov, the opposition envoys tried to persuade them that Russia should contribute to Syria's democratic development rather than sanction the regime's brutal actions against unarmed demonstrators. Russia's veto of a UN Security Council resolution condemning the Syrian government in February 2012 made it clear that Asad could rely on Moscow for firm diplomatic support, and it also had the effect of making supporters of the opposition realize that they would not be able to use the UN to press Asad to surrender power.

SAUDI ARABIA. Saudi Arabia exerted considerable diplomatic and financial assistance to limit regional unrest during the 2011 Arab Uprisings. Riyadh provided nearly \$4 million to **Egyptian** officials in an attempt to suppress massive demonstrations and stabilize Cairo. King Abdallah extended diplomatic efforts to Yemen, **Jordan**, and Morocco, in part to prevent **Ira-nian** influence from expanding. In response to the uprising in Syria, Saudi Arabia applied considerable pressure on President **Bashar al-Asad** to halt military operations against protesters and implement reforms. Abdallah denounced Syrian officials responsible for brutally suppressing demonstrations. On 8 August 2011, Riyadh recalled its ambassador while simultaneously stepping up pressure on Gulf states to announce harsher penalties against the Asad regime. Representatives from Kuwait and Bahrain recalled their ambassadors in a display of Syria's growing regional isolation. The Saudis became patrons of Syrian opposition groups, particularly those with an **Islamic fundamentalist** cast, and called for foreign powers like the **United States** to supply arms to the rebels fighting against the Asad regime.

TURKEY. **Bashar al-Asad** and Turkey's prime minister, Recep Tayyib Erdoğan, developed a close rapport in the years preceding the uprising. **Trade** between their two countries had grown to \$2.5 billion in 2010. Were Syria's uprising to become a protracted conflict, it would affect the Turkish **economy** and put strains on internal stability because of the **Kurdish** population that straddles the border, and also because of latent sectarian tensions between **Sunni** and Alevi communities in Turkey's Hatay province.

Not long after the first demonstrations, Erdoğan urged Asad to adopt political reforms. Then, in May, he called on Asad to stop using force. In June, fierce fighting in Jisr al-Shaghur set off the first large wave of **refugees** seeking haven in Turkey, and Erdoğan singled out **Mahir al-Asad** for condemnation. Turkey responded to the escalation of violence in the summer of 2011 with a diplomatic initiative. In August 2011, Erdoğan met with President Asad to convey diminishing patience and assist in starting a reform

program that might appease protesters. His offer to mediate fell on deaf ears. Asad's refusal to turn back from reliance on repression led Ankara to reverse course.

In September, Turkey severed ties with the Asad regime and imposed an arms embargo. It also withheld support for him in the **United Nations** Security Council and allowed opposition conferences to be held on Turkish soil. Istanbul became the headquarters for the first large opposition coalition formed in October 2011, the **Syrian National Council**. Ankara allowed the **Free Syrian Army** to establish bases for its struggle to overthrow the Asad regime and permitted its fighters to cross the border. Turkey also became a primary haven for Syrian refugees, whose numbers were nearing 400,000 in June 2013.

UNITED STATES. When Barack Obama became president in 2009, he intended to reorient U.S. policy in the Arab world and repair relations frayed by the American war in **Iraq**. Due to the Asad regime's tacit support for the anti-American insurgency in Iraq and its open alignment with **Iran**, **Hizbullah**, and **Hammas**, the previous administration's policy largely consisted of bellicose threats and sanctions. President Obama's early overtures to **Damascus** made little headway, and when the **Syrian Uprising** broke out, he called on **Bashar al-Asad** to initiate substantial political reforms and urged him to use restraint in dealing with demonstrations. At the end of April, the United States made stronger statements and imposed sanctions on high-ranking security officials, adding Asad to the list in May. Ambassador Robert Ford's July visit to **Hama** to show American solidarity with the protest movement infuriated Syrian officials. On 18 August, Obama called on Asad to resign to allow for a transition to a democratic government.

As the Asad regime escalated its use of force against protesters, pressure on the Obama administration to take effective action increased. Throughout the uprising, the United States has pursued multilateral diplomacy to find a solution to the turmoil in Syria, working with the Arab League, the **European Union**, and the **United Nations (UN)**. Some members of U.S. Congress called for arming Syrian rebels, but the Obama administration held back due to the practical hurdles in the way of preventing weapons from falling into the hands of rebel factions hostile to the United States. Washington's efforts to the work through the UN reached a dead end in February 2012, when **Russia** and **China** vetoed a Security Council resolution intended to raise international pressure on Asad to implement a cease-fire, withdraw military and **security forces** from towns and cities, and allow peaceful demonstrations. The United States then turned to a multilateral approach through the **Friends of Syria**, a group of approximately 60 countries that supports the

Syrian opposition. At first, this group tried to cooperate with the largest opposition organization, the **Syrian National Council (SNC)**, but such efforts proved ineffective due to infighting.

In October 2012, U.S. secretary of state Hillary Clinton announced American frustration with the SNC and support for an initiative to rally opposition and military factions for a new organization, which took shape at a conference held in **Qatar** the following month, resulting in the establishment of the **National Coalition of Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces**. In its first several months, the National Coalition turned out to be just as ineffective as its predecessor, leaving the United States and other supporters of the opposition with few options, particularly given the firm backing Asad received from Russia and Iran.

Pressure on the Obama administration to go beyond diplomacy arose from a number of considerations. By June 2013, the humanitarian dimension of the Syrian conflict was catastrophic, with an estimated 90,000 to 100,000 Syrians killed in the fighting, 1.5 million **refugees**, and nearly 4 million internally displaced individuals. Moreover, Syria's stockpiles of chemical weapons posed two threats. First, government forces might use them against civilians, a war crime whose moral repugnance would bolster calls for military intervention against the regime. Second, if the government loses control over chemical weapons, they could end up in the hands of **Sunni** militants. Third, the government could decide to transfer some chemical weapons to its **Lebanese** ally Hizballah. In response to the last concern, **Israel** launched three strikes inside Syria in January and May 2013. The involvement of Hizballah and Israel pointed to the possibility that the Syrian conflict could spark a regional war affecting Israel, **Lebanon**, **Turkey**, Iraq, and **Jordan**.

In the face of such complex scenarios that could jeopardize U.S. interests, the Obama administration was wary of taking steps advocated by interventionists. Proponents of supplying arms to rebels in the hope that they could hasten Asad's fall could not ensure that weapons would not fall into the hands of anti-Western militants or **terrorists**. Likewise, adventurous proponents of military intervention assumed that it would bring down Asad and spare Syria a civil war, but in the light of Western wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, such a scenario seemed unlikely, and supporters of diplomacy pointed out that a military operation in Syria would have to be massive, costly, and lengthy.

Nevertheless, in June 2013, the Obama administration concluded that the Syrian government had used chemical weapons against civilians and consequently approved the provision of lethal aid to vetted elements of the Syrian opposition. Whether American weaponry would make a difference could take months or years to know.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Before World War II, 20th-century scholarship on Syria was predominantly the work of French orientalist, so works by the most prominent early French authors have been included. In the postwar era, a new generation of French scholars continued the distinguished tradition of their predecessors, while American and British scholars produced a vast corpus on Syria. Consequently, this bibliography includes more English-language works and, for reasons of space, adopts a more selective approach to recent French-language publications. Naturally, there is a vast amount of Arabic-language literature on all aspects of Syria, but because this is a general reference for Western readers, Arabic works are not included. There is also an enormous amount of literature on archaeology in Syria and nearby lands, but in view of this work's more recent focus, I have selected just a few general works on the country's prehistoric and ancient heritage.

The only comprehensive historical survey of Syria from ancient times to the 20th century is Philip K. Hitti's classic, although dated, *History of Syria, Including Lebanon and Palestine*. Detailed treatment of individual topics is found in various articles in the second edition of *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*. More recent surveys of modern history (since 1800) include A. L. Tibawi's *A Modern History of Syria, Including Lebanon and Palestine* and Tabitha Petran's *Syria*. Kamal S. Salibi's *Syria under Islam* covers the first Islamic centuries; the Crusades are comprehensively treated in Kenneth Setton's five-volume *A History of the Crusades*; and for the Mamluk era, one should consult *Muslim Cities in the Later Middle Ages*, by Ira Lapidus.

Much recent historical scholarship has focused on the Ottoman era. Bruce Masters's *The Arabs of the Ottoman Empire, 1516–1918: A Social and Cultural History* covers the entire four centuries. Notable monographs on the early Ottoman period are Muhammad Adnan Bakhit's *The Ottoman Province of Damascus in the Sixteenth Century*; Karl Barbir's *Ottoman Rule in Damascus, 1708–1758*; Abraham Marcus's *The Middle East on the Eve of Modernity: Aleppo in the Eighteenth Century*; and Bruce Masters's *The Origins of Western Economic Dominance in the Middle East: Mercantilism and the*

Islamic Economy in Aleppo, 1600–1750. For the 19th century, one should consult *An Occasion for War: Civil Conflict in Lebanon and Damascus in 1860*, by Leila Tarazi Fawaz, and *Families in Politics: Damascene Factions and Estates of the 18th and 19th Centuries*, by Linda Schatkowski Schilcher.

For social and economic history in the 18th and 19th centuries, the works of Abdul-Karim Rafeq and James A. Reilly are essential reading. Monographs that represent efforts by scholars to explore the history of women and the family include *The Kin Who Count: Family and Society in Ottoman Aleppo, 1770–1840*, by Margaret L. Meriwether, and *In the House of Law: Gender and Islamic Law in Ottoman Syria and Palestine*, by Judith Tucker. A rich portrait of urban life is James Grehan's *Everyday Life and Consumer Culture in 18th-Century Damascus*. The rise of Arab nationalism in the late Ottoman period is the subject of C. Ernest Dawn's *From Ottomanism to Arabism: Essays on the Origins of Arab Nationalism*; Philip S. Khoury's *Urban Notables and Arab Nationalism: The Politics of Damascus, 1860–1920*; and a fine collection of essays, *The Origins of Arab Nationalism*, edited by Rashid Khalidi. The most sophisticated study of nationalism in Syria is *Divided Loyalties: Nationalism and Mass Politics in Syria at the Close of Empire*, James Gelvin's conceptually rich exploration of its elite and popular forms during the brief span of Amir Faysal's rule after World War I.

Syria's first bid for independence is the subject of Malcolm B. Russell's careful study *The First Modern Arab State: Syria under Faysal, 1918–1920*. For the Mandate era, Philip S. Khoury's *Syria and the French Mandate: The Politics of Arab Nationalism, 1920–1945* is the outstanding work on political dynamics. A study on the role of gender in the same period is *Colonial Citizens: Republican Rights, Paternal Privilege, and Gender in French Syria and Lebanon*, by Elizabeth Thompson. Two classic studies remain the best sources on the first decade of independence: Patrick Seale's *The Struggle for Syria: A Study of Postwar Arab Politics, 1945–1958* examines Syrian developments in a regional context, while Gordon Torrey's *Syrian Politics and the Military, 1945–1958* treats domestic developments in greater detail. The definitive study of the Ba'th Party's early development is John F. Devlin's *The Ba'th Party: A History from Its Origins to 1966*; a more specific work on the first Ba'thist regime is *Syria under the Baath, 1963–1966: The Army-Party Symbiosis*, by Itamar Rabinovich. For the unity experiment with Egypt and the Syrian Ba'th's relations with Egypt, Malcolm Kerr's *The Arab Cold War, 1958–1970: Gamal Abd al-Nasir and His Rivals* is a model of elegant conciseness. Malik Mufti presents a convincing interpretation of attempts at Arab unity in *Sovereign Creations: Pan-Arabism and Political Order in Syria and Iraq*.

A number of valuable studies by political scientists provide thorough analyses. Raymond A. Hinnebusch has published several specialized studies, of which *Authoritarian Power and State Formation in Ba'thist Syria: Army,*

Party, and Peasant is the most accessible to the general reader. Patrick Seale's *Asad of Syria: The Struggle for the Middle East* gives a more journalistic treatment that is sympathetic to the official Syrian perspective. The first few years of Bashar al-Asad's regime receive close study in David Lesch, *The New Lion of Damascus: Bashar al-Asad and Modern Syria*, and Volker Perthes, *Syria under Bashar al-Asad: Modernisation and the Limits of Change*. Works that place Syria's political economy in comparative context include Joshua Stacher's *Adaptable Autocrats: Regime Power in Egypt and Syria*; *Middle East Authoritarianisms: Governance, Contestation, and Regime Resilience in Syria and Iran*, edited by Steven Heydemann and Reinoud Leenders; Steven Heydemann's *Authoritarianism in Syria: Institutions and Conflict, 1946–1970*; and David Waldner's *State Building and Late Development*.

There is no single work that surveys the conflict with Israel; instead, the reader must consult general works on the Arab–Israeli wars. Mention should be made, however, of Aryeh Shalev's *The Israel–Syria Armistice Regime, 1949–1955*. A review of Syria's terms for a settlement with Israel during the early 1990s is in Alasdair Drysdale and Raymond A. Hinnebusch's *Syria and the Middle East Peace Process*. Syrian foreign policy is considered in Seale's two monographs and Kerr's study, as well as in the following works: Sami M. Moubayed, *Syria and the USA: Washington's Relations with Damascus from Wilson to Eisenhower*; Jubin M. Goodarzi, *Syria and Iran: Diplomatic Alliance and Power Politics in the Middle East*; Adeed Dawisha, *Syria and the Lebanese Crisis*; Yair Evron, *War and Intervention in Lebanon: The Israeli–Syrian Deterrence Dialogue*; Eberhard Kienle, *Ba'th v. Ba'th: The Conflict between Syria and Iraq, 1968–1989*; and Pedro Ramet, *The Syrian–Soviet Relationship since 1955: A Troubled Alliance*.

There are few general studies on the economy. In 1955, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development published *The Economic Development of Syria*, an overview of Syria's economy in the early years of independence that serves as a sound baseline for later works. Two decades later, E. Kanovsky surveyed developments in a monograph also entitled *The Economic Development of Syria*. For a review of the results of land reform and state domination of manufacturing, trade, and finance, one should refer to Volker Perthes's *The Political Economy of Syria under Asad*. Bassam Hadad's *Business Networks in Syria: The Political Economy of Authoritarian Resilience* gives analysis of the limited revival of the private sector after decades of socialist policy. The best current sources for specific and general aspects of the economy are such international organizations as the World Bank and the United Nations (see the websites listed in the section on Internet resources).

The flavor of everyday life is elegantly captured in Andrea B. Rugh's study of a Syrian family, *Within the Circle: Parents and Children in an Arab Village*. Laurence Deonna's *Syrians: A Travelogue (1992–1994)* offers glimpses of Syrians from different religious and ethnic groups and sketches of some prominent personalities in the arts, entertainment, and politics. Readers interested in portraits of women's lives will find a compelling account in *Both Right and Left-Handed: Arab Women Talk about Their Lives*, by Bouthaina Shaaban. Perhaps the keenest insights into Syrian life will come from reading the growing volume of fiction translated into English. Ulfat Idilbi's novel *Sabriya: Damascus Bitter Sweet* depicts facets of conservative Muslim customs in Damascus, while Hanna Mina's *Fragments of Memory* portrays vignettes of rural life. Muhammad al-Maghut's poetry in *The Fan of Swords* conveys the alienation of rural migrants to the city and the pervasive fear of living in the shadow of intrusive security forces.

Electronic databases that index thousands of articles in hundreds of journals have superseded periodical and annual bibliographies as the essential tools for keeping abreast of current scholarship. Thus, while *Index Islamicus* remains an indispensable source, it is now updated in electronic format. The *Middle East Journal* remains invaluable for the quarterly chronology that it publishes in each issue.

The World Wide Web is a realm of treasures and pitfalls for students, researchers, and followers of current news. The pitfalls of the Web are twofold. The first is the ephemeral character of websites. One might bookmark a useful website and then find that it has moved or no longer exists just a few months later. The second pitfall is its unmediated or unfiltered character. Anyone can post a website and broadcast distortions and tendentious assertions. The discriminating web surfer, however, will find three dependable kinds of websites: academic societies, libraries, and think tanks; official bodies like international organizations and government sites; and Internet directories.

The Middle East Studies Association of North America is the professional society of regional specialists in various disciplines. Its website (www.mesa.arizona.edu) maintains links to major academic institutions. The Syrian Studies Association, for scholars, graduate students, and researchers, also maintains a website at www.ou.edu/ssa/index.html. Elissa Slotkin has compiled and annotated *Research Guide: Researching Syria on the Internet*, which can be found at www.mei.columbia.edu/internet_about.shtml. Oklahoma University's research page on Syria (www.ou.edu/mideast/country/syria.htm) has links to newspapers, scholarly articles, websites, and blogs in and about Syria. Historical photographs of Syria may be accessed at Creative Syria (<http://creativesyria.com>). The International Crisis Group (www.crisisgroup.org) issues timely reports based on interviews with government officials, foreign diplomats, and experts: Syria Comment is a

valuable daily blog that collects news articles and commentary from experts in the United States, Europe, and the Arab world. It can be found at www.joshualandis.com/blog/.

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XXIX. MUSIC

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XXX. INTERNET RESOURCES

The most current information about economic, social, and political conditions in Syria is available on the websites of international organizations and watchdog groups. The Internet also has sites for news, arts, and travel.

www.amnesty.org Amnesty International annual and periodical reports are posted on the organization's website.

www.al-bab.com/arab/countries/syria.htm Al-Bab is an Internet directory for Arab countries. Its Syria page has numerous links for news, books, history, economy, and government websites.

www.fao.org The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations posts information about the production and supplies of food, natural resources related to agriculture, fisheries, forestry, and livestock, as well as rural living conditions and climate.

www.hrw.org Human Rights Watch on Middle East and North Africa issues annual and periodical reports on Syria.

www.indexoncensorship.org The Index on Censorship focuses on restrictions on free expression, one of several freedoms covered by the more general human rights organizations.

www.ilo.org The International Labor Organization offers information about working conditions, child labor, measures and reports on gender equity in employment, and development programs to raise skill levels of workers.

www.made-in-syria.com/index.htm Made in Syria offers a directory of businesses and cities.

www.escwa.un.org The Population Information Network of the United Nations has tables on such social and economic indicators as transportation, energy consumption, education, and health.

<http://en.rsrf.org> Reporters without Borders advocates for the protection of journalists and freedom of expression. Its website has reports and news items about incidents and conditions in Syria.

www.souria.com/home.asp Souria.com is a casual site for chat rooms, jokes, magazine articles, and society that appeals to Syrians living overseas.

www.syria-report.com/ Syria Report, begun in November 2002, offers current economic and business news on a monthly basis.

www.shrc.org/default.aspx The Syrian Human Rights Committee posts annual reports and documents human rights violations.

- www.transparency.org/ Transparency International rates government corruption around the world. Its annual report on Syria ranks it in terms of perception of corruption, press freedom, rule of law, judicial independence, and accountability of government officials to citizens.
- www.unicef.org The United Nations Children Fund page about Syria has standard information about education, health, and nutrition. It also gives updates on the impact of current conditions on children, including the humanitarian crisis triggered by the Syrian Uprising.
- www.undp-pogar.org/countries/syria/index.html The United Nations Development Program has reports on political and social developments pertaining to rule of law, civil society, and the status of women.
- www.unesco.org The United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization posts standard information about laws governing antiquities and heritage sites, as well as reports about current conditions, for example, the impact of the Syrian Uprising on archaeological sites and valuable historical buildings.
- www.unhcr.org The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has current data on the refugee crisis caused by the Syrian Uprising, as well as information about Iraqi refugees residing in Syria.
- www.unfpa.org The United Nations Population Fund reports not only population issues, but also human rights, women's health, and emergency situations.
- www.un.org/unrwa/ The United Nations Relief and Works Agency has data on Palestinian refugees and camps in Syria.
- <http://data.worldbank.org/country/syrian-arab-republic> The World Bank keeps a trove of economic, social, and environmental data, including surveys about climate change, education, and conditions for women and children, as well as occasional reports on such topics as avian flu and job training for youths.
- www.who.int/ The World Health Organization has a general country profile that includes the national health system, disease, and nutrition, as well as occasional reports about current conditions, including the impact of the Syrian Uprising on hygiene and health systems.

About the Authors

David Commins received his A.B. from the University of California, Berkeley, and his Ph.D. from the University of Michigan. He is professor of history and Benjamin Rush Distinguished Chair in the Liberal Arts and Sciences at Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. He lived in Syria for two years in the early 1980s, first as a student at Damascus University, and then as recipient of a Fulbright-Hays doctoral dissertation research grant to study Muslim religious reformers in the late Ottoman period. Commins is author of *Islamic Reform: Politics and Social Change in Late Ottoman Syria* (1990), *The Wahhabi Mission and Saudi Arabia* (2006; updated paperback edition, 2009), and *The Gulf States: A Modern History* (2012).

David W. Lesch received his B.A. from the University of Maryland Baltimore County, and his M.A. and Ph.D. from Harvard University. He is professor of Middle East history at Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas. Lesch is author and/or editor of 12 books, including *Syria: The Fall of the House of Assad* (2012; updated paperback edition, 2013); *The Arab–Israeli Conflict: A History* (2009); *The New Lion of Damascus: Bashar al-Asad and Modern Syria* (2005); and *The Middle East and the United States: History, Politics, and Ideologies: Fifth Edition* (2012).

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In 2011, massive protests caught the Arab world's autocrats by surprise and brought down powerful leaders in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Yemen. Thousands of Syrians took to the streets in March 2011 calling for the "fall of the regime" (the popular slogan of Arab uprisings) but found themselves confronting a determined foe, willing to slaughter thousands of citizens and destroy entire city neighborhoods to hold onto power. By the middle of 2013, Syria was in the midst of a nightmarish civil war marked by more than 80,000 deaths, sectarian massacres, the flight of 25% of the country's population, the disintegration of government institutions in much of the country, and a rising humanitarian crisis as food, medicine, and electricity grew short. Nobody in Syria or the outside world appears to be in a position to stop what looks like a fight to the bitter end, at whatever cost to the country.

This third edition of *Historical Dictionary of Syria* covers the recent events in Syria and the history that led up to these events through a chronology, an introductory essay, and an extensive bibliography. The cross-referenced dictionary section has more than 500 entries on significant people, places, events, political parties, institutions, literature, music, and the arts. This book is an excellent resource for students, researchers, and anyone wanting to know more about Syria.

DAVID COMMINS is professor of history and Benjamin Rush College of Arts and Sciences at Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. He received a Fulbright-Hays doctoral dissertation research grant to study Muslim religious reformers in the late Ottoman period at Damascus University in Syria, and he has published several books on the Middle East.

DAVID W. LESCH is professor of Middle East history at Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas. He is the author or editor of twelve books on the Middle East.

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